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MONTHLY MAGAZINE

FEBRUARY 1911

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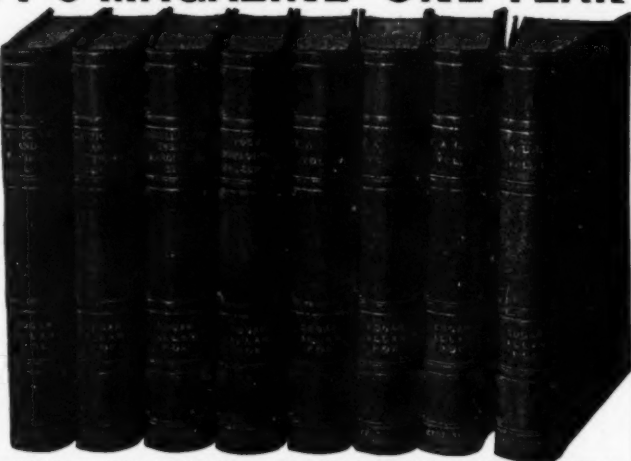
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LIPPINCOTT'S MONTHLY MAGAZINE

FEBRUARY, 1911



THE FORTY-THIRD PUMPKIN

BY

GEORGE RANDOLPH CHESTER

Author of "The Cash Intrigue," "Get-Rich-Quick Wallingford," etc.

CHAPTER I.

THE FIRST THREE

THAT the earliest rays of the sun, as they squinted down on Hickoryville, should burnish the smooth sides of a great golden pumpkin on Dad Adams's front porch was nothing at all remarkable, for pumpkins abounded in Hickoryville. It was the centre of a veritable pumpkin paradise: the valley itself was called Pumpkin Hollow; pumpkins nestled at the side of every corn-shock, pumpkins found their way into every granary and barn and attic, while as for pumpkin pie, nowhere outside of that favored region was this toothsome delicacy ever known in its real perfection. Hard-headed Dad Adams was himself an extensive grower of pumpkins, and he was a connoisseur in the matter of pie. Why not, since pretty Etta Adams, after the death of her mother, had come to be acknowledged as the best pie-baker in the township, and as an especial expert with pumpkins?

All this has been explained in order to make it plain why Dad Adams ought not to have been surprised to see a pumpkin anywhere about his place. Nevertheless, when he saw this particular yellow sphere as he strolled contemplatively out to the front gate while waiting for breakfast, it offended his very vigorous ideas of neatness and order, and with characteristic promptness he immediately strode over to pick it up and take it back to the granary, where it belonged. But why,

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when he had lifted the pumpkin, should he suddenly pause and examine the stem of it with so much curiosity? That is what Granny Hooker wanted to know!

Peering out through her little vine-strung window of twelve panes, she wiped and rewiped her specs in vexation. Just then there was nothing in all this wide world of quite so much importance as to learn why Dad Adams was scratching his tousled head in perplexity. She knew better than to ask, however, for Granny Hooker was reputed as a witch, and Dad Adams had no use for witches nor their ways. Flying in the face of Fate, he always began his larger tasks on Fridays, and on the thirteenth, if possible; as a matter of principle, he looked at the new moon over the wrong shoulder; he kicked pins out of his way; he enjoyed seeing black cats cross his path, and he never neglected to pick up horse-shoes, that he might nail them over his barn door, wrong side up. It was the wonder of Pumpkin Hollow that, in spite of all these and many other foolhardy traits, Dad Adams lived and prospered.

Well, it was no use worrying about a little round hole which had been burned through a pumpkin stem, so Dad swung back to the granary with his burden. The granary was near the fence, and on the other side of this was the Widow Moore's barn. The Widow herself, in a pair of gum boots, was out helping her son Bob feed the horses and milk the cows, and now she emerged from the wide door, plump and fair and rosy-cheeked from her exercise in the crisp morning air.

"Looks like one o' my back-lot pumpkins you got there, Dad," she commented in neighborly raillery.

No matter how slight, this was an opening, the very thing for which Dad had longed. It gave him the chance to relieve his annoyed perplexity under the guise of venting a just protest.

"Mis' Moore," said he, depositing his pumpkin on the ground, and laying one lean forefinger in the palm of his other hand, "I been a-wantin' to see you. If you don't keep your chickens out o' my yard, I'm goin' to have a Braymy stew every day till they quit comin'!"

"I dare you!" retorted the Widow Moore, placing her two fists upon her waist. "If you do, I'll eat fried game rooster if it breaks my teeth!"

"Go right on, go right on!" flared Dad. "I give you lief if you c'n ketch them game Leghorns o' mine."

Bob Moore, big and straight and curly-haired, came out of the barn.

"Look a-here, you, Dad Adams——" he began, but his mother reached up and passed her plump hand over his face from the eyes downward.

"Shut up!" she directed, and laughed.

Dad Adams, without another word, turned his back upon the Moores and stalked into the granary. He placed the pumpkin on the

oat-bin and turned to walk away, but before he got out of the door he wheeled and came back, frowningly to ponder once more that little burned hole in the stem.

Henrietta Adams was finishing the frying of a great pile of golden Johnny-cakes when Dad stamped into the kitchen.

"I'm a-goin' to have an awful tussle with that Bob Moore one of these days," he remarked savagely.

"I hope not, Pop," rejoined Etta, with great complacency, as she flopped over the third cake of a griddle-full, "because if you do, he'll lick you."

"I'll ketch him without his rabbit-foot some day," he rejoined sarcastically as he stood before a long, pointed fragment of looking-glass nailed over the kitchen wash-stand, and dragged a broken-toothed comb through his mop of wiry hair.

"He don't carry a rabbit's foot," indignantly replied his daughter.

"I would n't put it a-past him," was the retort. "Anybody that would n't get married on a Friday——"

"'T was n't his fault," rejoined Etta, deftly slipping the last Johnny-cake on the pile and setting the platter on the table near the window of the big kitchen. "I would n't get married on a Friday myself, and you know it. Not to please you nor anybody else!"

"Friday or nothing!" and he broke one of the few remaining teeth in the comb.

"Never you mind, Pop," she warned him. "You're mighty set in your ways, but I bet you the time 'll come when you 'll no more put on a new suit o' clothes on a Monday, or walk under a ladder, than——"

"Henrietta Adams, if you was n't so big, I'd spank you! Ain't that breakfast ready?"

Etta only laughed as she poured the coffee. It was not until he had waded half through the pile of Johnny-cakes that Dad referred to the mystery of the morning.

"Who left that dog-dratted pumpkin on the front porch?" he demanded.

"What pumpkin?" asked Etta in return.

This was sufficient answer to his query, and he said no more about it. If she did not know, he was not going to tell her. It was part of his disciplinary methods, and Dad Adams was a great disciplinarian. He dismissed the matter from his own mind, in fact, until the following morning, when he strolled as usual toward the front gate.

While he was still at the side of the house he noticed that Granny Hooker was out on her own crumbling little porch, staring over in the direction of his house with an intensity which seemed fairly to burn. As he came even with his own steps, Granny Hooker trembled with excitement. It seemed an age until his roving glance turned in the

direction of his front door, and then Granny Hooker was amply repaid for her watching, for Dad Adams was distinctly startled. There, in the exact spot occupied by its predecessor, was another pumpkin—a smaller one!

Dad approached it with slow thoughtfulness, and, as before, he examined it in much perplexity. Granny Hooker would have given worlds if she had only known that a little round hole had been burned through its stem. Dad felt the piercing glance of Granny upon the back of his very neck, and he refused to give her the satisfaction of letting her see his puzzled face. He backed across the walk and carried the second pumpkin to the granary.

That evening Granny Hooker sat at the window of her darkened room through dusk and the early darkness until the moon rose, and until it had passed high over the Adams house, leaving the front in dense shadow. In the morning she was up before the break of day, and as the dawn began to filter through the blackness of the retreating night she quivered with anxiety. Was it or was it not there? At one time she fancied that she could discern a dim, bulky sphere upon the porch across the road, and at another time she feared that she had been mistaken. Unable to bear the suspense, she shut her eyes while she counted, very slowly, two hundred and fifty; then she opened them and gave an ecstatic sigh of satisfaction. The pumpkin was there! It was about the same size as the first one, only it was a little lopsided, and pale on the flat side.

Granny Hooker went right out to the fence. She inspected the Adams house narrowly. Not a blind was up. No thin string of blue smoke as yet ascended from the kitchen chimney. She hesitated no longer. She darted across the road, she opened the squeaky gate, she tiptoed up the steps of the Adams porch, she stooped down, and, through her freshly wiped spectacles, inspected closely the third pumpkin. The stem had a little hole burned neatly through it!

"Mercy!" ejaculated Granny. "And to think they've picked out Dad Adams; him that's a scoffer!"

She ran back into the middle of the road and peered up the single straggling street which formed Hickoryville. Only one thread of smoke was visible from any of the chimneys, but one was something. Granny, borne on by excitement, trotted with remarkable agility along the dusty path worn at the roadside, until she came to Jake Purvis's house, where she was delighted to find the kitchen door wide open. Mrs. Purvis, whose waist was slightly larger than her any other periphery, and who wore her hair on top of her head in a tight little knot about the size of a walnut, was stirring the batter for Jake's breakfast, but the moment she saw Granny Hooker she lost all interest in Johnny-cakes.

"I got it," she said in triumph. "It's got the white tip on its tail all right, but does it make any difference if there's a wee, tiny white spot on its forehead? It's a plumb dead-black cat, all but that."

"Um-m-m-m, I reckon not," replied Granny judiciously, "though, of course, it had ort to be all black except the very tip of its tail."

"To-morrow night's full moon," said Mrs. Purvis, "'n' I reckon I'll have to get you t' tell me over again how you do it. I know you take three white hairs from the tip of a black cat's tail, and you tie 'em with a hair from the head of the one you want to put the love charm on. Jake ain't got so blessed many hairs left, but I reckon he can spare one for this an' never miss it. You understan', Miss Hooker, I ain't complainin' o' Jake none, only sence he's got to makin' a little money he's so blame' stingy, an' I thought if I could jes' put a spell on him, mebbe he'd loosen up the strings o' that old leather purse o' his'n."

"I tell you, Marthy," replied Granny: "you come over this afternoon or this evenin', and I'll go over the whole rigamarole with you. I ain't got much time now." She was glancing, as she spoke, across at Jud Beezy's house. Smoke was beginning to arise from its chimney. "I jes' run over to borry a little salt. Say, Mis' Purvis, there's a funny thing happened down to Dad Adams's. Three mornin's now, hand runnin', there's been a pumpkin on Dad's porch, an' each an' every one of 'em has a hole burned through the stem, an' Dad don't know where they come from nor how they got there, an' he's 'most worried to death, an' I tell you, Mis' Purvis, it don't do to set yourself agin them that rides through the air at midnight, f'r that weren't no cool breath that blowed that hole through them pumpkin stems, I say, Mis' Purvis, that last one's down on Dad's porch now, an' if you hurry you might see it before Dad gets up and finds it;" and Granny, breathless for the lack of periods, and forgetting the salt, hurried over to Beezy's kitchen door. Before she had called, however, at all the houses where the kitchen chimneys showed successive signs of life, she began to be met at the door with her own information, so she felt it time to hurry back.

When Dad Adams came out that morning he found a quivering assemblage of tousle-headed, early morning men, women, and children lined solemnly along his fence, gazing with awe-stricken countenances at the lopsided pumpkin upon his porch. He knew instinctively, before he had even reached the corner of the house, why they were there, and he glared at the line savagely. As savagely he turned toward the porch and went up the steps, grabbed the pumpkin, and, without a word, started back to the granary with it.

Mrs. Hicks-with-the-wart-on-her-nose was not to be so easily baffled.

"Where'd your pumpkins come from, Dad?" she inquired.

"None of your all-fired business!" he retorted, and walked, with great composure, half way back the length of his house.

His intention had been to carry that pumpkin to the granary with icy coolness, but one of those emotional impulses which made the Adams temper a matter of local pride to all Pumpkin Hollow came over him, and he smashed the lop-sided pumpkin with great fury against the Widow Moore's fence. The Widow was out immediately.

"Dad Adams," she declared, "if you litter up my yard any more with your rotten old pumpkins, I'll have the law on you!"

Dad Adams went back to the granary and secured the other two pumpkins. Returning to the identical spot from which he had thrown the first one, he smashed these two against the Widow Moore's fence for the edification of assembled Hickoryville; then he went into his own kitchen and slammed the door after him!

CHAPTER II.

THE FOURTH ONE

WIRELESS telegraphy is a snail. Before the sun had any sort of start at all that morning, the news was all over Pumpkin Hollow, from Peek's Point on the north, where old Cap Peek wore his faded blue army cloak the year around and tried to wrest a living from a farm which stood mostly on edge so that it could shed slate and shale every spring, to Dutch Ridge on the south, where Fritz Yodler raised the finest peaches and apples and rosy-cheeked girls in the whole county. Zeke Harberry, away over on the eastern edge of the bowl, had heard that early in the morning invisible spirits ranged up outside of Dad Adams's fence and pelted him with pumpkins. Joe Gollop, over at the western extremity, had it that Dad Adams had been driven crazy by a devil with seven horns and a fiery tail, and that he was at that moment smashing all his fall crop of pie fruit. Everybody had heard a more thrilling version than all the others, but on two points there was absolute agreement: one, that a small hole had been burned through the stem of each pumpkin, and the second, that the ha'nts had at last begun on stubborn Dad Adams.

Perhaps no one was affected by this flying and multiplying tale more than Long John Flanders. Long John lived about two miles out of town, just near enough to make a nice bit of exercise after supper, and he took the walk every evening. In the summer he sat under the big locust tree in front of Sam Tinker's shoe-shop, helping the other male gossips save the country, until the frogs in Hen Damm's calamus patch warned him that it was time to go home. In the winter he joined the same band of patriots around the red-hot cannon-ball stove in Chip Rawson's General Merchandise Store. The only drawback to his

pleasant evening trips was that he had to pass the Baptist graveyard on the way home. Going into Hickoryville in the early evening was not so bad, but late at night the return was a fearsomely lonely trip, for there was not a living human creature between the Widow Moore's house and the Flanders cabin.

Under stress of the great pumpkin sensation, Long John had a very interesting subject of debate all day—whether to go or not to go. Habit and curiosity won the discussion, although before supper they had lost it. A full stomach is not so timid as an empty one, so, immediately after arising from the table, Long John walked out to the stile and looked longingly down the road, then he thought and thought and thought. Long John was the man who invented the machine to strike matches on a grindstone. Presently he came into the house full of determination. He went up to the one attic bedroom, and when he came down he had under his arm a little bundle wrapped in an old newspaper.

"You ain't a-goin' into town, I reckon?" inquired Mrs. Flanders, as he reached for his hat.

"Reckon I am, Sue," he admitted. "Reckon I'll have t' have some t'baccy."

Mrs. Flanders eyed him with awe. Mrs. Flanders walked lopsided, and one could almost have split kindling wood with her hard, thin face.

"I'm e'en-a-most afraid t' stay alone, John," she protested. "Seems t' me you would n't want t' go t' town o' nights since th' ha'nts are cuttin' up such high jinks at Dad Adams's."

"Shucks!" retorted Long John. "That ort n't t' worry you none. You want to have grit like me, Sue;" and he started for the door with a swagger.

Mrs. Flanders resigned herself to the inevitable.

"What's in th' bundle, John?" she asked him as he went out of the door.

He looked at the parcel under his arm reflectively and then he looked at his wife.

"I reckon it might kind o' break the charm if I was t' tell yuh," he replied, "but it's my ha'nt insurance, that's all," and he tapped the package proudly. Evidently it was his own most brilliant idea.

For all Long John's claim of bravery, he began to whistle as he came in sight of the roadside knoll over which the Baptist graveyard sprawled its white headstones, and the nearer he drew the more aspirately and disconnectedly he whistled. As he passed the brier hedge which marked the termination of the burying ground, he broke into a trot, and was still breathless when he drew up at the store porch. Though too late for the Sam Tinker Club, it was not yet cool enough for the cannon-ball stove, and the patriots were all outside on the heavy

benches which had borne the test of a hundred jack-knives for many years.

"See any ha'n'ts when you passed Dad Adams's house, Long John?" asked Fatty Hicks, determined to treat the only topic of conversation as a jest, if only for a moment.

"Little early for 'em, I reckon," replied Long John, in the same dissembled cheerfulness of spirit.

"Early or late," observed Jake Purvis, "I would n't be in Dad Adams's shoes for no money, an' I ain't much of a believer neither."

"Sure not," agreed Jud Beezy. "That's for the women folks. Oh, o' course I throw a pinch o' salt over my lef' shoulder if I spill it, an' I allus sneeze from my right side; but that's jes' sort o' habit."

"I don't mind so much which way I sneeze," said Mealy Jones, "but I'm mighty p'tic'lar t' allus start off with th' right foot first, and I would n't no more think o' passin' Sissy Williams or any other cross-eyed woman without stoppin' t' talk a minute and take off th' cuss, than I would o' shakin' hands acrost th' table."

"I wonder what pumpkins means, anyhow?" inquired Chip Rawson, leaning in the doorway of his General Merchandise Store and carefully picking a bit of cotton batting from the only pair of creased trousers in Hickoryville.

Seven explanations were offered him at once, by seven men whose wives had that day consulted dream-books, Granny Hooker, and one another. They varied somewhat, but the general concession was that pumpkins were the very worst of bad luck, particularly when they had holes burned through their stems. The discussion on this phase of the question was still lively when a particularly crusty voice from outside the little circle requested Chip Rawson to "bring out a package of coffee and be mighty quick about it." All eyes turned to the newcomer, who advanced to the edge of the porch. It was Dad Adams, and he had a shotgun across his shoulder.

For a moment there was a distinct lull. The doomed man was among them. Fatty Hicks, however, had the least reverence for anything of any man in town, and it was he who broke the burning silence.

"Well, Dad," he observed, "I s'pose you'll take some stock in signs and spirits if the pumpkins hold out."

"In what?" snorted Dad. "It'll take more than three pumpkins t' make me as big a fool as some o' my neighbors. This here joke's gone jes' fur enough, too, an' if I find who done it I've got a load o' rock salt in this here shotgun that I'm a-goin' t' fill 'is carcass with! He's too fresh anyhow, an' I think I know who gits the salt."

As he spoke, he glared at Bob Moore, who, reclining comfortably against one of the porch posts, had not spoken a word.

"Bet you my Jersey calf agin one o' your colts that you get more

pumpkins, and that you don't find out where they come from," he now cheerfully offered, and Dad took the bet so quickly and so savagely that it sent a thrill of satisfaction through the entire gathering.

There came a swish of skirts up the path, and Etta Adams stepped on the porch and went into the store.

"Good evenin', Miss Adams," said young Chip, with his store bow. "Nineteen cents, Dad," and he collected for the coffee.

Etta waited for Chip in the doorway, and when he joined her they went walking together back through the store to the thread-case, chatting most amiably.

"He's a fine youngster, that Chip Rawson," observed Dad. "He'll turn out as good a man as his daddy. I don't reckon *he'd* rare up against gittin' married on a Friday, 'specially if they was t' be a good sixty-acre farm an' a new house throw'd in with th' girl."

Bob Moore slowly drew his tall form up on the porch. He stretched his arms and yawned, then he went in the store. In a few moments he came out with Etta, and they started down the path together.

"Etty," observed her father, "wait a minute. I want you t' walk home with me."

"I'll be back and get you, Father," replied Etta sweetly, and went on.

Mr. Hicks had the bad grace to snicker.

"Fatty Hicks," said Dad Adams sternly, "I been a-pasturin' your little red heifer on my meadow lot long enough. If you don't keep 'er out o' there, I'll hold her for feed!" and Dad stalked home.

"Stubborn as a mule," commented Jake Purvis. "Dad Adams won't be satisfied till he gits a spell laid on all his stock, or somethin' like that."

"It don't do t' overlook signs and warnin's, that's a fact," said Hen Damm. "There was Mis' Greevy that saw somethin' white move 'round in th' buryin' ground, an' in spite o' that she went on and married Jorum Henry that was Bud Greevy's born enemy before he died, an' she took down with pneumonia and was buried jes' two years from the day she planted her first husband!"

"An' it was in the Baptist buryin'-ground she saw it, too," added Long John Flanders in a voice just above a whisper.

Oh, it was a delightful preparation for Long John's homeward trip! They told nothing but ghost stories until ten o'clock, when every one had gone home but Long John, and Chip Rawson began to turn out the lights. Long John engaged Chip desperately in conversation inside the door, and outside again after he had locked it. He even walked up to Chip's own house with him and held him at the gate for a while, but at last he was compelled to turn his reluctant way homeward.

As he passed Dad Adams's place he was already whistling. He

stopped suddenly. The dim figure of Dad Adams sat grimly on the front porch, with his shotgun across his knees. He was perfectly motionless, and at first it might be thought that he had dropped to sleep, but an impatient jerk of Dad's head and a hitching of the gun on his knees told better. Long John debated whether to speak or not, but Dad did not seem to be in any mood for conversation, so the belated one trudged hesitatingly onward, gripping his little paper bound bundle of "ha'nt insurance" tightly under his arm.

Patiently Dad Adams sat on the porch. The last light in the village was out. Granny Hooker's house had been dark for some time, but by the glow of her pipe behind the window he knew that she was still watching. Dense midnight came, the wee small hours dragged slowly on, and then that darkest time of just before the dawn. Dad had sat unblinking through it all, sustained by the Adams determination and the Adams temper, but now he caught himself half dozing at times. All at once he felt, rather than heard, a little thud on the porch beside him, and something flicked his ear. The fourth pumpkin had arrived!

Dad gave but one look at it, then he jumped to his feet and ran around the far end of the porch, which was partly screened by a luxuriant trumpet vine. This was the only direction from which the culprit could have operated, and as he passed the end of the porch he either saw, or his excited imagination allowed him to fancy, the whip of a coat-tail just around the far corner of the house. He ran there as rapidly as he could go. At that corner the same keen eyesight or heated imagination let him see again the flop of a coat-tail around the next one, and he madly dashed after it. Three times Dad Adams encircled the house on a dead run, his shotgun in his hand, but on the third round his foot tripped in the grass at the side of the gravel path, and he fell headlong to the ground. The shotgun went off. There was an instant squeal of pain, and with grim satisfaction Dad Adams jumped to the conclusion that he had bagged his game. The window of the Widow Moore's bedroom opened with a bang, and a white-robed figure thrust itself part way out of the window.

"Of course that's you, Dad Adams," said the figure. "Well, you've shot my white shoat. I've got t' get ready an' come right down an' put on hot water, an' I want you t' understand that you got t' help hang an' dress that pig."

"I've already done my part," Dad retorted. "I've salted it."

He stood a moment in silence to give the Widow Moore a chance to reply if she could find the answer. Her only comment was to slam the window shut, and thereupon Dad Adams clomped slowly back to the front porch to examine the fourth pumpkin and see if it had a hole burned through the stem. The front door of Granny Hooker's house across the road stood ajar.

CHAPTER III.

A MARRIAGE LICENSE AND A HEN

WHERE did they come from? The mystery of it agitated Pumpkin Hollow from centre to circumference. With a population of four hundred souls, not counting babbling babes, there were four hundred explanations offered, all of them doing great credit to the active imaginations of the dwellers in this yellow pie paradise. Granny Hooker's home became a positive Mecca. Women of all shapes and dimensions came trooping in and out of her kitchen door all day long. They came in with breathless eagerness and went out in breathless excitement, and Granny Hooker, faithful to her duty, kept them posted. She was able to issue hourly bulletins. Dad Adams was out in the back lot, milking the cows. He looked worried. Dad Adams was out tinkering up his "democrat" wagon. He had been distinctly seen to look up and cock his head sideways, as if listening to voices in the air. Dad Adams was out in the south field chopping up pumpkins—yes, actually, pumpkins—for his cattle! How could he bear to do it? So ran the bulletins.

Each woman who came sooner or later asked with bated breath: "But how, Mis' Hooker, *how* do you reckon them pumpkins really got there?"

It was but natural that the interest in this same question should be high in the Adams family, although Dad spoke not a word of it to Etta, nor Etta to Dad. Etta, however, being human and a woman, must discuss it somewhere, and, meeting Bob Moore out at the fence, she asked him point-blank:

"Bob Moore, *where* do those awful pumpkins come from?" and she looked him squarely in the eye.

Bob ran his fingers through his curly hair and tugged at it in either confusion or perplexity.

"I'll be jiggered if I'll tell you, Ett," he drawled, and then his eyes suddenly twinkled. "What does your Paw say?" he inquired.

Miss Etta answered his smile with another.

"I don't know," she dimpled. "If I was handy when he's sayin' it, I'd stuff my ears. I reckon he says most of it out in the barn, because I can hear things slammin' out there every once in a way."

They stood holding to the top rail and, looking each other in the eyes, laughed silently for a few minutes over the picture of "Paw" saying things in the barn to his own accompaniment of slams. Then Bob suddenly became grave.

"I dunno," said he; "seems to me if I was Dad I'd worry a sight over the warnin' he's gettin'." Etta looked his countenance suspiciously over, feature by feature. There was not a trace of a twinkle anywhere.

"Is your Paw still payin' for that insurance?" he added as an afterthought.

"No," she replied, with a firm set of her jaws. "I made him stop it. I don't want no price for Paw. I ain't that keen on number one."

"How about bein' keen on number two?" asked Bob, shifting uneasily from one foot to the other. "Number two, that's me, you know. Look a-here, Ett, I want t' show you somethin'."

He looked carefully over his shoulder at the house. The Widow Moore was nowhere to be seen. He looked back at the barn. Dad Adams was inside it, slamming things. Then he produced from the inside pocket of his jumper a stiff, folded paper. Etta opened it and read it with interest. It was a legal document granting the august permission of the State for one Robert Adonijoram Moore, sworn to be of legal age, to marry one Henrietta Deborah Adams, also sworn to be of legal age. Having calmly perused it, Henrietta Deborah Adams passed it back to the pink-faced young man.

"Mighty neat got up, Bob," she commented. "Goin' t' frame it?"

Bob's face lost its pink. He pressed two enormous palms down on Etta's two hands where they gripped the top rail of the fence.

"No, I ain't a-goin' t' frame it. I'm a-goin' t' use that license right away."

Etta looked up at him and smiled sweetly.

"It 'ud be a pity t' have you change any o' the names in there," she suggested. "Seems to me, Bob, like you're already figurin' on bossin' th' ranch. Now, folks don't do that with the Adamases."

"No, nor they don't do it with the Moores," retorted Bob. "I reckon when we do get hitched, they won't be any bossin' about our house."

"You bet there won't unless I do it," observed his unannounced fiancée.

Bob grinned appreciatively.

"Oh, come on, Ett," he said, changing his tone to one of coaxing, "let's jes' go get hooked up anyhow. I got four hundred dollars saved up. I can rent the Jim Cooper forty, and I reckon we can sizzle along without any thanks to anybody."

"Yes, we could," observed Etta. "That's if we was plumb fools, which one of us ain't. Your Maw won't give the word till my Paw does. When he gives up his mule-headed notion that we got to get married on a Friday, everything 'll be all right, an' he's got t' do it. I'm just as mule-headed myself as any Adams that ever walked. Well, when Paw gives in we get that sixty he promised us, and the new house your Maw promised to build on it, and all we got t' do is to wait."

"Wait!" snorted Bob. "Say, when Dad Adams gives in, his teeth 'll be droppin' out of his head an' his eyesight 'll be gone an' he'll be

playin' with rattle boxes an' tryin' t' cut a new set of teeth on rubber teethin' rings. I know Dad, and I don't want to wait till I'm bald-headed."

"Now, don't you champ on the bit so much, Bob, or you'll get yourself all in a lather. Let me tell you something. I'm makin' quilts as fast as I kin, and I reckon t' be married before Christmas. You jes' put that license away somewheres and keep it. You'll need it. There's a lot o' things might change Paw. Suppose, for instance, these pumpkins kept a-comin'?" and once more she inspected Bob Adams narrowly.

He looked as blank as the side of one of those golden pie mines of which she had just spoken.

"Henrietta!" rasped a strident voice from the direction of the barn.

Henrietta did not jump, although Robert Adonijoram Moore betrayed a great deal of nervousness as he fumbled the legal document into the inside of his blouse. Henrietta looked around very calmly.

"Yes, Paw," she answered sweetly.

"I want my rat-tail file!"

"It's stickin' in th' crack o' th' oats bin," she informed him, and turned back to gaze Bob contemplatively in the eye.

Dad Adams stood for a moment in indecision.

"Etty," he presently rasped, "git me a new axle rag!"

"There's a nice clean piece of coffee-sackin' hangin' up on the outside of the corn-crib, Paw," she replied, and once more turned to contemplate the spellbound Bob.

Dad's hesitation was longer this time.

"Ett," he roared by and by, "come away from that fence!"

"In just a minute, Paw," she replied in her most soothing tone.

"Say, Paw, come here. I want t' show you somethin'."

Dad Adams again hesitated, but in the end he came suspiciously up to them.

"Bobby dear," said Etta, "jes' show Paw that paper."

Bob shifted from his left foot to his right, and from his right back to his left. He cleared his throat three times, he wiped the perspiration from his brow with his left forefinger; then he slowly drew out the paper. Etta took it from him and, opening it, presented it to her father, who read it over without a trace of emotion and handed it back to Bob; then he held out his brawny hand.

"Shake hands, my boy," he said. "By George, there ain't a young man in these parts that I'd like t' see marry Etty so well as you!"

Bob, beaming with delight, made a pump-handle across the top of the fence out of Dad Adams's right arm. But Etta had lived with Dad for nearly twenty-two years, and she knew him well. Now she studied

him with the most alert suspicion, which was in one more moment confirmed.

"Which Friday is it to be?" asked Dad, and the light and color faded out of Bob's face with the incalculable speed of a tropical sunset, which is over almost before it has begun.

But this was only disappointment. Both the Adamses and the Moores came of good fighting stock, and though the blood might leave Bob's cheek it never grew stagnant in his heart.

"The Friday after you git Granny Hooker to charm away whatever is bringin' you them pumpkins," he retorted, and Etta, reaching over the fence, slapped him upon the shoulder.

"Sic 'im, Bob," she encouraged him.

The grin which had reflected Dad's satisfaction when Bob changed color turned into a snap of the teeth.

"Look a-here, you Rabbit's-foot Robert," he blurted, shaking his long finger in Bob's face, "when I do that it'll be because I've met a real live ghost face t' face; an' then you c'n poun' crosses in the heels o' my boots t' keep away witches, you c'n put four-leaf clovers in each o' my shoes, you c'n give me burned ash leaves from a graveyard for love sickness, and I'll agree t' stay in bed all day every Friday. Say, I thought I told your Ma t' keep them Braymy hens off o' my lot. See that 'n there over in my winter radish bed? Well, I'm a-goin' t' have that 'n for dinner," and Dad Adams tore after the industrious Brahma.

Biddy saw him coming, and the series of squawks which she gave as she spread her wings and lit out for the shelter of the dead pea-vines in the back garden brought the Widow Moore running from her back yard, where she was rendering the lard from the prematurely salted shoat.

"Dad Adams," she screamed, "you let my hen alone!"

Dad had no time in which to answer. The hen in one of its wild circles passed between his legs, and he made a fruitless grab for it. Wheeling, he tore after it. The Widow Moore waited for nothing further. Taking a little run, she placed her hands on the top rail of the low fence and vaulted over it with the agility of a school-boy, and she too took after the fowl. Backward and forward the hen squawked, leading them through currant bushes and across thorny rose beds, tumbling behind the rain-barrel and out again, up over the top of the woodshed and back among the pea-vines once more, with Dad Adams and the Widow Moore bumping into each other at every turn, though from the heat of the chase paying no attention to these encounters. Excitement, family loyalty, and general principles drew Bob and Etta into the chase, and it was the latter who, by accident rather than by skill, won the coveted prize.

Later on, Dad brought out the hen in full sight of the Widow

Moore as she stood inside her kitchen window, and wrung its neck. Presently he came over to toss the head and the claws of the Brahma into the Widow's yard, but was a bit disappointed that she had nothing to say; that she viewed the act with cool indifference, not to say disdain.

That very evening, Granny Hooker, on duty at her front window, saw a remarkable occurrence taking place before the sitting-room window of the Widow Moore's house. The Widow Moore was leaning out of the window. A pair of Dad Adams's game white Leghorn chickens, known to be absolutely unapproachable, were industriously picking up what was evidently some special tidbit in Dad Adams's yard over next to the Widow Moore's fence. There seemed to be some of it, whatever it was, on the other side of the fence, for, disdaining the ripe seeds on the weeds in the corners of the fence, they reached their necks through between the rails as far as they could and ate all of the delicacy within reach. They made frantic attempts to get more, and, failing in that, wandered up and down in the fence corner ill at ease and disconsolate. Granny polished her specs and rubbed off her window-pane. Her eager breath was clouding all the glass surfaces within reach.

When she put on her specs again she noticed that the Widow Moore, leaning out of the window, held one chubby forefinger extended on a tense arm, the elbow of which rested on the window-sill. As if in obedience to that commanding finger, one of the white Leghorns gave a loud screech and flew over the fence. Landing on the inside, it began to peck once more at the ground and to express in low, pleased accents its entire satisfaction with the food. Either this line of conversation or the uplifted forefinger of the Widow Moore was irresistible, for the second Leghorn also bounded over the fence.

Still that extended forefinger! Still the two pleased game chickens pecking away on the ground! Suddenly Granny Hooker was horrified to see both white fowls stretch their necks stiffly up in the direction of the compelling forefinger. They moved toward it as the Widow Moore drew it within. They seemed to try with all the power that was in them to resist this fatal fascination, for they planted their claws firmly into the ground and tugged backward. It was of no use. They were bound by some potent tie which could not be broken. Granny Hooker, in her excitement, let her upper teeth come down, and they nearly choked her.

When she had recovered the plate of teeth and had once more wiped her specs, she looked out again, just in time to see that strong forefinger give a mighty backward sweep, and the Leghorns, without using their wings at all, fly straight up through the window into the Moore sitting-room! It was—well, flabbergastering! There was no other word for it. In all Granny Hooker's years she had never seen anything so

decisively the work of witchcraft as these occurrences of the past few days, nor so particularly devil-leagued as this action of the Widow Moore's. And her so set up! Granny Hooker did not wait for any more; indeed, she could not. Hastily donning her shawl, she hurried out to make quick informal calls on Mrs. Purvis and Mrs. Beezy and Mrs. Damm and Mrs. Tinker and Mrs. Hicks-with-the-wart-on-her-nose. She was able now to figure out a new tangle in the great pumpkin mystery of Hickoryville!

In the meantime, Dad Adams, in locking up his hennery for the night, had missed his two prize white Leghorns, and he was looking high and low for them. He did not find them; but in the cold gray dawn of the early morning, when he was bringing back from its place on his front porch, under Granny Hooker's quivering scrutiny, the fifth pumpkin with the hole through its stem, his eye caught a vivid-red glint in the grass of his side yard. He walked over there. It was the crimson comb of the white head of one of the missing Leghorns. A few feet away lay another head, and scattered about were four yellow chicken feet!

CHAPTER V.

GRANNY HOOKER'S BUSY DAY

GRANNY HOOKER could stand it no longer. Any other person in Pumpkin Hollow who had been subject to so many baffling annoyances, nay, even menaces, would have been to seek her advice and aid long before this. Well, if Mahomet still refused to come to the mountain, the mountain would transcend all precedent and go to Mahomet. But Granny Hooker was not rash. Before she stepped upon the distinctly unhallowed premises, she was careful to copy the last verse of the last chapter of the first epistle of John seven times on a little square of paper, across and up and down and diagonally both ways on one side and triangularly on the other, and fold it into the shape of a Maltese cross and put it in her left shoe; she made sure that she had hung safely about her neck the red gall-stone with the skull mark on the face of it; she also put in her pocket a little bag containing the foot of a toad, a white horse-hair, and a bit of mould from the grave-stone of an upbaptized infant in the Baptist graveyard, gathered at midnight in the dark of the moon. Thus sheltered against all possible evil influence, she knocked at Dad Adams's kitchen door just as Dad was finishing his morning supply of Johnny-cakes.

Etta opened the door, but Granny Hooker knew better than to speak until she had come face to face with the man of doom. She brushed right by Etta, and Dad looked up to find her wrinkled face bending over his own and her gimlet eyes positively gloating over him.

"Excuse me——" began Granny.

"I expect you need it," retorted Dad, who had not been able to look upon her with patience for more years than he could accurately count.

"I know'd it was my duty t' come and tell you somethin'," went on Granny.

"I've noticed that everybody that ever meddled in anybody else's business always started in on it writhin' under a sense o' duty," snapped Dad.

"There's been some mysterious goings on 'bout your place here o' late," Granny continued.

"Who said so?" demanded Dad.

"I don't need t' be told, Dad Adams; I don't need t' be told; nobody needs t' be. It's gettin' so that it's not only a danger t' you, but a danger t' the whole town. There's a woman, a rather hefty, yellow-haired woman, that lives close by you, that is wieldin' a powerful influence over your life."

"Huh!" snorted Dad, but nevertheless he looked up with a certain amount of interest. The only hefty, yellow-haired woman who lived near him was the Widow Moore.

"This blonde woman, late yesterday afternoon, held up one forefinger and charmed your two white Leghorns right through her settin'-room window. How do I know? I seen it done. Now I reckon you can give a guess as to who is witchin' them pumpkins onto your front porch."

Dad Adams arose from the breakfast table.

"You can just go right back over t' your shanty an' dream again," he wrathfully told her. "I would n't put it a-past the Widow Moore to wring the necks of my white Leghorns if she got a hold on 'em, an' I reckon she did. I would n't put it a-past her nor that hulkin' son of her'n to put them pumpkins on my front porch or t' do any other mean, ornery, vexin' thing that come int' their heads. They're the contrariest, stubbornest, all-fired mule-headedest people that ever breathed the breath o' life; but I don't want you to come here and tell me that the Widow Moore is mixed up with any hocus-pocus business. I know her mighty well, and even if she could do it, she would n't. Ordinary natural cussedness is good enough for her."

"Yes, but, Dad, you don't seem t' understand."

"Clear out!" said Dad, and went into the front room, slamming the door after him.

"Well," said Granny resignedly to Etta, "I don't reckon there's anything now can save your Paw. His blood 'll be on his own head."

"Well, I guess it's his blood," rejoined Etta calmly, and politely opened the door for Granny Hooker.

Dad Adams watched her through his front window. She did not go back home just then. She had first to call on Mrs. Purvis and Mrs.

Beezy and Mrs. Hicks-with-the-wart-on-her-nose and Mrs. Tinker and a few others. Seeing her safely out of the road for a few moments, Dad stalked over to the fence and called:

"Jennie! Oh, Jennie!"

At the third call the Widow Moore came bustling out of the kitchen. She had evidently forgotten something, or a new idea had just struck her, for she bustled back in, and when she came out again she was carrying a chicken from which she had just been singeing the pin-feathers. Dad grinned sheepishly when he saw the chicken.

"I wish you joy of 'em," said he, "but I don't reckon you could stick a fork through the gravy from them Leghorns."

"Oh, I'll get along with 'em all right," she remarked cheerfully. "I'm a-goin' t' make 'em up into chicken salad an' donate 'em to th' Union Sociable, if I don't break my hash-cutter."

Dad gave an appreciative guffaw, and then he scratched his head meditatively.

"It's them very Leghorns I came over t' see you about," he began presently. "Oh, no, no, no, no, no, I ain't got a mite of a word t' say about your gettin' 'em. It was your innings, I reckon. But what I want t' know is jest how you managed t' capture 'em."

"That'd be tellin'," replied the Widow. "I might want t' get some more that a-way."

Dad reflected seriously upon this veiled threat, but the subject at hand was, after all, of even more importance.

"Th' reason I asked you," he resumed, "was on account of a rigamarole Granny Hooker was just over here t' tell me. She said she saw you hold up your finger and charm 'em right through your settin'-room window."

The Widow Moore clutched her sides hastily and laughed until the tears rolled down her cheeks. Then she backed up against the apple tree which stood just on her side of the fence, to laugh some more.

"More than that, she said that you was in the' witchin' business and had somethin' t' do with them pumpkins that gets on my front porch every morning."

The Widow Moore stopped laughing, but she still regarded him with an amused look.

"Well," he demanded, "are you goin' t' tell me how you got them chickens?"

"No, sir-ree! Not to your dyin' day. I would n't give you that much satisfaction;" and by the muscles in her shoulders she straightened herself up from the apple tree.

One rotted and dried apple still hung on the branches, and the jolt which she had given the tree loosened it. It came down squarely on Dad's bare head.

"Say!" he suddenly charged, "I'm tired o' havin' this apple tree o' your'n shade my sparrow-grass bed, an' if you don't root it up and move it where the branches won't hang over on my property, I'm goin' t' take the thing into my own hands;" and with this parting shot he went away.

Fifteen minutes later the Widow Moore had opened one of the lower rails in the fence between the two lots, and had driven every last one of her chickens over into Dad Adams's yard. When Dad came out to go to the field, they were clustered all around his feet. He had to wade through them. He stopped and looked at them a moment, and he fumed like a Vesuvius just before an eruption; but he did not whimper aloud. He remembered that he still had some fine game chickens. Still, there were other things which could be done, and in place of going to the fields, as he had intended, he went out to the barn, presently returning with a step-ladder and a saw. He planted the step-ladder under the apple tree, and, squinting carefully along the line of the fence, he climbed up and sawed off every branch just where it crossed the dividing line between the two properties.

Granny Hooker returned just in time to see him completing this job, and she started right back up the road again. When she regained her own house, she found a visitor sitting on the back steps watching for her. It was cross-eyed Sissy Williams.

"Good mornin', Siss," said Granny, not exactly ungraciously, but without any great degree of cordiality. "If you come t' have your fortune told again, I ain't got time this mornin'. Your fortune's jes' th' same to-day as it was last week."

"I don't know," protested Sissy. "Three nights ago I dreamed of givin' money to a beggar, and that means I'm a-goin' t' have a fine proposal of marriage. Night before last I dreamed o' bein' at a dance, and that means that I am soon t' get married. And last night I dreamed that Supervisor Stone's new barn, where the Union Sociable's t' be at, was jes' full of fine hay an' fine horses an' everything, and that's the very luckiest kind of a dream. The man that marries me is goin' t' be rich. So I reckon I wanted t' see you about somethin'."

"That sure enough was a fine lot o' dreams," agreed Granny, visibly impressed. "I reckon you better come in."

Sissy Williams threw off her shawl and prinked herself up before the glass. She had on a new red collar and her front hair was waved.

"Now I'm a-goin' t' shut my eyes," she stated, sitting primly down before the oracle. "Now you look at me with my eyes shut. I ain't so bad-lookin', am I?"

"That's what you ain't," Granny agreed with unusual warmth. "Funny nobody never noticed it before."

Sissy tossed her head with great satisfaction.

"Well," she said, "I reckon that the man I been dreamin' about all this time is Chip Rawson. Now, if Chip could just be got t' see me right, I reckon I'd have a chance. Ain't there anything we can do to make Chip kind o' see me right?"

"Yes," whispered Granny, instantly sympathetic. "Tell you what you do. I'll make you some drops from some graveyard leaves and some yarrow leaves and some other things I'll scrape up, an' you manage t' slip some o' it in somethin' Chip eats or drinks."

"I know," said Sissy eagerly. "At the Sociable! That's how come Stone's new barn in my dream!"

"All right, then," agreed Granny. "That'll be your chance. I'll write some words on a piece o' paper for you that you must burn over a candle in your bedroom and swallow the ashes in a spoonful o' water with two drops o' some magic oil I'll give you. Then I'll write some more words on another piece o' paper, that you must say over seven times to-night before you go t' bed and seven times in th' mornin' when you get up, and then if you do get Chip, mebbe you can make it easy for me to get little things out o' th' store once in a way."

"Mis' Hooker," promised Sissy earnestly, "if I get Chip, I'll make him give you any blessed thing you want!"

"Then run along, child," exclaimed Granny, jumping up. "I got t' bustle 'round amongst my yarbs and simples and mixtures and ointments an' brews and broths, and get you all fitted out."

After Sissy had gone, Granny took another eager look out of the front window. Dad Adams was gathering up all the sawed off branches from the apple tree, and tossing them over into the Widow Moore's yard.

Mrs. Purvis called. She had burned the three white hairs from the tip of the black cat's tail with all proper ceremonies, on the night of the full moon, and the next day she had asked Jake for a new dress. The results were not such as to convince her that the charm had worked, and now she had come back, as a purely commercial proposition, to compel Granny Hooker to produce the promised results. Granny Hooker sighed.

"Well," she said, "sometimes it works and sometimes it don't, but, honest, you can't expect to do much with a dried up, money-grabbin' runt like Jake is. I'll make up some stuff, though, that you can put in Jake's coffee that I reckon 'll bring 'im 'round. I'll make it good and strong, too."

Mrs. Purvis lingered at the door.

"Ain't you kind o' nervous, Mis' Hooker," she said, "livin' so close to all these manifestations?"

"It's dreadful," groaned Granny Hooker. "I'd give e'en-a'most anything if I could move away."

It was not until nightfall that the real surprise of the day occurred. Granny Hooker, mashing up leaves and shapeless and nameless dried things which she took from various little cracked dishes, heard a timid knock at her door. Opening it, there was revealed upon her side door-step the nervous form of Chip Rawson, who instantly glided in, lest he be seen of the neighbors.

"Fine weather, Mis' Hooker," observed Chip, mopping his brow with a pink-edged handkerchief.

"Scrumptious," agreed Granny.

Chip folded up his handkerchief, creasing it over and over on his knee into a small cylinder.

"Er—eggs has gone up two cents," he presently informed her.

"Um-hum," said Granny, patiently waiting.

"I got some fine new gingham this morning," remarked Chip, after a long silence. "Cheap, too."

"Um-huh," returned Granny, inspecting him curiously.

Then she got up from the rocker on which she had been sitting.

"Now, honest, what is it, Chip?" she bluntly asked him. "You did n't come here t' talk about the weather, nor eggs, nor yet calico. I'm a-gettin' up a love mixture here, so I'll just work at it while you're makin' up your mind."

"A love mixture!" blurted Chip, grasping at the words. "T' tell you the honest truth, Mis' Hooker, I come down t' see you about something like that. 'Course you understand, Mis' Hooker, I ain't a mite superstitious, but the way I look at it, it's like this: it ain't a-goin' do any harm to try, an' if it does any good, why a body might as well have the benefit."

"Who might the party be?" asked Granny, with a wild hope that Sissy Williams might, by some freak of chance, be the one, in which case her own labors would be easy and the results certain.

"Why, it's—it's—o' course this is strictly confidential, Mis' Hooker."

"Don't you be afeered o' me," Granny reassured him. "I got secrets enough locked up inside o' me t' make Pumpkin Hollow a howlin' wilderness. Don't you worry. Who is the young lady?"

"Why, it's—it's—now, don't you breathe a word o' this, Mis' Hooker—but it's Etta Adams, an' I don't mind sayin' that if I get her, any little thing you might happen t' want any time from the store is your'n for the askin'—within reasonable limits, you know, o' course."

"I see," said Granny, revolving the matter over in her mind. It looked like a good chance all around. Whether Sissy Williams got Chip, or Chip got Etta Adams, the material advantage was all on her side.

"I don't reckon it'll be any trouble at all," said Granny Hooker.

"As I say, I'm makin' up a love mixture right now. There seems to be considerable call for it, so I'll make up quite a batch. All you got t' do is just t' put yours in somethin' Ett eats or drinks, and then watch what happens. Sometimes it happens quick and sometimes it takes a long time, but it most generally works."

There was a sound of barking and snarling out in front, and Granny rushed to the window. In the excitement, Chip Rawson slipped out the back way and across lots to the rear end of the General Merchandise Store and Post Office.

The barking out in front proceeded from the throat of Hen Damm's bull-dog, a particularly ferocious animal, guaranteed to tackle anything from polecats to locomotives, and to whip everything that walked on legs, from elephants down. Hen had just taken him in to Dad Adams's porch, and was holding him back by the collar while Dad drove a long, stout staple into the porch floor, securely fastening thereto the loose end of the long chain to which the dog was attached.

Granny Hooker sighed wearily. She saw quite plainly that she was to have another sleepless night.

CHAPTER VI.

DAD PROPOSES

HEN DAMM's bull-dog had bleeding lips in the morning, but there had been very slight damage done to the sixth pumpkin. Dad sent for Henry to come down and get his dog, and he said most unkind things about the animal. It had not barked; it had made no noise whatsoever; it had merely fought the pumpkin silently and with great earnestness. Not even the rattling of the chain had aroused Dad, nor had it aroused Granny, who, that she might have a more uninterrupted vision, had spent the night on her porch, wrapped in a quilt. The dawn found her huddled against a post, sound asleep, her pipe in her lap and a hole burned in her gown. Her discomfiture was even greater than Dad's. When Fritz Yodler's wagon came lumbering into town and woke her she shook her fist at the other side of the road, including all the Adamses and the Moores in her anathemas. Then she crept stiffly into bed, groaning with every step. The fall night air had been very inconsiderate of her rheumatism.

Nor was Dad's discomfiture to end there. After seeing Hen Damm, he went out to Cap Peek's place to borrow Cap's rusty old bear-trap. When he arrived home again, something peculiar in the look of his outbuildings made him hurriedly investigate. The eaves of his barn and of his corn-crib, where they hung over the line of the Widow Moore's property, had been sawed off close to the weather boarding, and all the waste shingles and clapboards had been dumped into Dad's

front yard. The Widow Moore was out washing her windows. She had her back turned to Dad, but she did not face about nor even look over her shoulder when she heard him trampling on the shingles. He came up to the fence and laid his arms on the top rail.

"Of all the women I ever saw, you've got 'em all beat for stubbornness and temper!" he charged. "I wish 't you was my wife. I'd mighty soon take it out o' you."

"That you would n't," she retorted, turning squarely around. "You 'd find I would n't be such a meek woman as the first Mis' Adams. I'd have you tamed so you 'd walk right up and take the bit in your mouth and slip your head into the collar inside o' three weeks. You need a tamin' yourself."

"I dare you to try it," said Dad.

"I'll do it," said the Widow Moore. "When?"

"Right now. Go in and get your bonnet."

The Widow Moore picked up her pail of suds and started inside.

"I'll be out in just two shakes," she informed him.

It was a surprisingly short time when she came out with her best alpaca dress on, but her bonnet, in place of being on her head, was swinging by its ribbon in her hand.

"Sorry t' disappoint you, Dad," she advised him, "but I've made up my mind not to go to-day."

"I ain't disappointed," he retorted. "I figured you 'd get contrary about somethin' or other and back out."

"Oh, I ain't backed out," said the Widow Moore; "but I just happened t' think that it's a Friday."

That was Dad's third discomfiture of the day. He had known that it was Friday when he made the proposition, but he had counted on sweeping the Widow Moore off her feet by the suddenness of it, and making her forget.

"Friday or nothin', then," said Dad.

"Nothing, then," said the Widow Moore, and went back into the house.

Five minutes more and she was out again with her pail and suds, and Dad Adams was slamming things around in the barn. Along about noon he came over to the fence again and called:

"Jennie! Come to think of it," he said, "I ain't goin' t' be so tarnation set on Friday as betwixt you and me. That only stands for the young people. Sunday 'll do just as well."

"Oh, no, Dad Adams," she said. "The trouble is, you're too slow. I had that figured out an hour ago. I been waitin' ever since for you t' come 'round. Sunday is the thirteenth, and you just found it out."

"All right," said Dad. "I'm willin' to bide my time. Oh, what

a different woman you'll be when I got a legal right t' train you t' trot without breakin' step!"

"Tandem, and me in the lead!" declared the Widow Moore; but Dad was not waiting to hear any retorts. He was on his way back to the barn, where he spent over an hour in cleaning and oiling the immense trap which had not seen service since the last bear was driven out of Pumpkin Hollow, ten years before.

The element of mystery had not weakened Dad's faith that some purely material agency was placing those pumpkins on his front porch. He had not been able to figure out a motive, and about that he did not care very much. He was merely determined to catch the pumpkin dispenser.

It was only a superstitious fear which, in spite of all her amulets and charms, kept Granny Hooker from blundering into the bear-trap that night after Dad had put it in place, late enough that no honest callers were likely to set foot on his front porch. Granny had slipped over and stood at the edge of the steps. It was almost vitally necessary for her to find out what he had placed there, but she dared not brave the full mysteries of that haunted spot, even though graveyards, due to much night prowling, had lost their awe for her. Dad, roused up just as she was going away, looked out of his window and saw her, investigated and found no pumpkin, anathematized her for a meddling old hag and lay down again. He had locked the front door and the front window and had slipped the door key in his own pocket; then he had made up a bed of comforts in front of the door. Whoever opened it would have not only to cross his body but to move him out of the road, for the door swung inward.

Just before daybreak the trap snapped and there was a mighty bump. Dad awakened instantly. He sprang to his feet, he kicked his pallet out of the way, he unlocked and threw open the door, but to no avail. The trap had been sprung, to be sure, but, upon lighting a match to see what it had clutched, he found only little moist wads of pumpkin rind on the centre prongs, while the seventh pumpkin lay a short distance away, with a few long, scraped streaks on two of its sides near the bottom.

Dad did not even stop to look for the burned hole in the stem. He merely sat down to think things over. One thing he had proved conclusively; nobody could have placed those pumpkins there from inside the house, thus clearing away the shadow of a suspicion which had once or twice intruded itself upon his mind concerning Etta. He looked contemplatively over at the Widow Moore's house, and he dismissed any suspicion of the Widow, for had she not instantly thrown open her window when he had shot her shoat? There still remained Bob Moore—or was it Granny Hooker?

Dad had no appetite at breakfast. Three Johnny-cakes and a cup of coffee were sufficient. The aggravation of it was wearing on his nerves. He longed for human sympathy and comfort; moreover, he longed for some one clever enough to help him out of his difficulties. There was only one person in the neighborhood shrewd enough to do it, and shortly after breakfast he went over to see her. Before taking this step, however, he went up to his bedroom and put on a white shirt. He also put on a standing collar and the changeable silk necktie, greenish purple or purplish green, whichever way the light happened to strike it, which Etta had bought him last Christmas.

He was particularly cautious about this visit, too. He waited until he saw Bob Moore cut across the back fields; he waited until he heard Etta go down in the cellar; then he hurried out of the side door, climbed the fence, and made his way with much haste into the Widow Moore's kitchen.

"If it'll do you any good to know it, I give up," said Dad. "S'posin' we jes' go to-day, Saturday, the twelfth. See, I'm a-givin' in t' you."

The Widow Moore looked him over suspiciously. Dad Adams was a fox whom it would do well to watch from every angle, and it had been his chief religion to have his own way upon all occasions, whether the point at issue was one of importance or not. She sat down to think the matter over.

"Are you certain, Dad, that this ain't counted an unlucky day of some sort?"

"Certain," said Dad.

"Then that's all right," said Mrs. Moore. "You may be the thick-headedest and the contrariest man on earth, but I will say one thing for you: your word's good; so I reckon I'll get ready. Jest you wait, and I'll be down in a jiffy. You might set in the front room. There's the new book in there I jes' got from th' peddler that was through here last week. It's called 'Gems of Hope,' and there's some mighty interestin' readin' in it. Fifty cents a month for fourteen months, and a real nice counterpane throw'd in."

Dad Adams did his best to get interested in "Gems of Hope," but every once in a while he listened to the rustling and the stepping about on the floor above him, and the palms of his hands grew moist with nervousness. Once or twice he felt an almost irresistible impulse to slip out the front door and hide in his own house until the Widow should be quite ready, but the fear of Etta held him back, although he knew that Etta and the Widow were the best of friends. Mrs. Moore, however, betrayed no signs of nervousness when she came downstairs.

"Got your license yet, Dad?" she cheerfully inquired.

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He sheepishly pulled it out of his pocket.

"Got it yesterday afternoon," he confessed.

"Oh, on Friday?" she said, laughing. "Well, I don't mind your having your own way that far, since you're givin' in for the rest of it. I don't reckon I'll have much trouble gettin' you half civilized, though it may take a little time."

Dad could find no resentment in his soul for this. He was looking the Widow over critically. It was impossible to believe that she was as old as forty-one.

"I reckon if a feller was to set his mind t' it, he might learn t' set a considerable store by you," he admitted.

"Should n't wonder," observed the Widow. "Well, I reckon we better step right out. I got a heap o' cookin' t' do for that Union Sociable to-night, so we'll jes' go right up to Preacher Sparrows and have it over with."

"To where?" inquired Dad with a frown.

"To Preacher Sparrows," said the Widow serenely.

"Look a-here, Jennie," said Dad, "I've give in jes' fur enough. I ain't a-goin' t' be married by no Baptis' preacher, and that's flat!"

"An' I ain't a-goin' t' have no Methodist minister marry me, an' that's flat!" declared the Widow, plumping down in the big rocking-chair and planting her two feet solidly upon the floor. "Not a step do I stir if you figure on Preacher Appleyard."

"I've give in enough," protested Dad with great firmness. "It seems t' me it's your turn."

"Thomas, I jes' can't. I'd really like t' give in, but I can't see my way clear to bein' married by a Methodist'. It's against my principles. For me, it's Sparrows or nothin'."

"Nothin'!" repeated Dad.

They sat and looked at each other for two long minutes. Argument, they both knew to be useless.

"Well, I reckon I might as well be goin'," said Dad. "I got a heap o' things t' do. I got t' make a chicken run for my games, and I'm a-goin' t' keep 'em penned up, and then I'm a-goin' to arrest for trespassin' every chicken I find overrunnin' my place."

"I'm busy myself," replied the Widow nonchalantly. "I got t' burn a hole through a pumpkin stem."

Dad looked at her in speechless contemplation. He opened his mouth to speak, but thought better of it and closed it with a snap. He stood up; he took off his changeable silk tie and his stand-up collar and stuffed them in his pocket; he tousled his hair; he took out a red bandana handkerchief and tied it around his neck to conceal his white shirt front; he buttoned his vest over the bandana, and clomped out of the front door, down the steps, and over to his own house.

CHAPTER VII.

THE UNION SOCIABLE

IN no chronicle of Hickoryville could Supervisor Stone be possibly overlooked. He was the greatest boon which the two churches could possibly have had, for Supervisor Stone, who wore mutton-chop whiskers and puffed-out cheeks with little red veins all over them, was an agnostic of the ultra-vigorous kind. Supervisor Stone believed in nothing, so he went to both churches on alternate Sundays and was the most liberal contributor which either of them could boast. Both ministers preached directly to him, and they could see, as they preached, his forensic mind grasping points which they knew they would hear from on Monday, when the Supervisor would take occasion to call and show them the errors of their ways. It was he who made the Union Sociables possible. The town was not large enough to make a purely sectarian sociable worth while for either church, but under agnostic Stone's auspices they could meet in perfect amity and divide the proceeds.

This particular Union Sociable was destined to be a great success. From early that morning until candle-light, there was a tremendous baking and frying and boiling and stewing, a violent clattering of pans and skillets and dishes, and a reckless outpouring of jellies and pickles and preserves and fruits, not only in Hickoryville but from edge to edge of the great natural bowl comprising all of Pumpkin Hollow; for this enterprising section, following the precedent which has been inaugurated all over the world since church sociables were first invented, took its own food to the gathering and bought it back at the rate of twenty-five cents per meal. But it was worth the price. It gave Mrs. Hicks-with-the-wart-on-her-nose a chance to compare her watermelon-rind preserves with those of Mrs. Gollop. It gave Amanda Peek a chance once more to taste Mrs. Harberry's famous spice cake and make another guess at the jealously guarded recipe. It gave everybody the chance to sample the cooking of everybody else and to discuss it with the next elbow neighbor. It served, moreover, as a clearing house for local gossip and for local love affairs.

With the passing of the forenoon and the coming of the afternoon, the clang and clatter of pots and kettles and of pans and dishes became more furious with each moment, except in Granny Hooker's house. Granny's cooking operations were conducted without clatter. Clad in a wonderful costume copied from the cover of a dream book, and with due and proper ceremonies, she was boiling over a spirit lamp, for exactly one-sixteenth of an hour, three white rose leaves, three red rose leaves, three forget-me-nots, and five blossoms of veronica, all of which had been gathered in silence when the full moon was at its

zenith. Upon these had been poured five hundred and ninety-five drops of clear Easter water, dew gathered from the grass on Easter morning. Three drops of that irresistible compound, swallowed by any person, were sufficient to ensnare the undying love of that person forever. Granny had magic words to mumble under her breath while she was doing this, too, and she had mystic signs to make over the vessel. She had cast aside the compound of graveyard leaves for the Easter mixture, since so much depended upon it.

She was very much occupied, but for all that, when she glanced out of her window, she saw something which made her forget her incantations. On her back porch, on the side toward Dad Adams's house, the Widow Moore was very ostentatiously burning a hole, with a red-hot hat-pin, through the stem of a lopsided pumpkin, and Dad Adams, standing on his own front porch, with his hands in his pockets, and pretending to whistle, was watching her. Etta Adams at her kitchen door was also watching the Widow Moore, and was laughing. Granny Hooker stood spell-bound; a sizzling noise broke the spell; it was the love potion boiling over!

Granny Hooker turned in fright to the old Dutch clock which stood in the corner, and threw her cabalistic cap on the floor.

"Drat it all!" she exclaimed. "That blessed love potion has boiled plumb six minutes, and now it's spoiled, and I ain't got but one more bottle of the Easter water left!"

It meant something to Granny Hooker to lose all that labor! She was compelled to wash every utensil three times in running water; she was compelled to empty her spirit lamp and wash it in the same way, and to put in fresh alcohol and a fresh wick; she was compelled to draw anew her cabalistic circle on the floor and sprinkle each corner of the room with a sprig of rosemary dipped in mountain-ash tea. All these precautions and many more Granny Hooker conscientiously took, and when at last she had her second potion boiled just three minutes and forty-five seconds to the tick of the old clock, and had cooled it and poured it off in a specially charmed and incantationed glass bowl, and had put on her stiff black alpaca dress and her black silk bonnet with the jet bead trimmings on it, the denizens of Pumpkin Hollow were rapidly gathering in Supervisor Stone's big new barn.

Granny's appearance was the signal for an avalanche of questions. Neither the Adamses nor the Moores had yet arrived, and there was no subject of conversation possible but that of pumpkins; and when Granny Hooker told of the latest development, the one she had seen upon the Widow Moore's back porch, the excitement rose to fever heat. That brazen act, especially after the witching of the two white Leg-horns, was enough to stamp the Widow Moore as far worse than Granny Hooker herself.

It was not like the Widow Moore to be late; she was usually among the first to arrive. Not only were Mrs. Purvis and Mrs. Beezy and Mrs. Hicks-with-the-wart-on-her-nose and Mrs. Hen Damm and Mrs. Tinker and Mrs. Mealy Jones and the Pruitts, and the Henrys, and the Williamses, and the Greevys all there, and bustling about setting the long table which extended through the middle of the barn, but Fritz Yodler and four of his apple-cheeked girls, Cap Peek and Amanda Peek and Susan and Aunt Jerusha, Mrs. Harberry and Mrs. Gollop and their families, Long John Flanders and Big John Flanders and Little John Flanders, the latter from away over at Old Settlersville, had already arrived and were spreading upon the board their stores of fried chicken and sliced ham and pickles and quince butter and honey and cake and potato salad and all sorts of delicacies.

Even the younger set had begun to straggle in. Lafe Hardy, who always led the bellings of unfortunate newly married couples, was already talking earnestly with the oldest Yodler girl over the clattering dish-pan. Young Freckles Hicks—not Fatty Hicks's boy, but his cousin from over in Weevil Bottoms—had driven over in his brand new buggy with Prudence and Hope Goody, who, in spite of their demure names, were as sly little devils as ever flirted on a countryside. Over from Piney Ridge came the two Truscot boys, who never brought girls, but relied on cutting some other fellow out, at the expense of a fight if need be. From the same neighborhood, bearing prim and precise jelly-cakes, came the three prim and precise Hoadley sisters, who, ranging around forty, strove to look like sixteen and still bridled and ogled and sighed and hoped. There came, too, Bud Teasewater, who was making a lawyer out of himself and got glorious practice at the Philomathean Debating Society over at the Red Run school-house, and he brought Ella Hemp and her everlasting dried-apple cakes.

But what is the use to enumerate? The entire youth and beauty and chivalry of Pumpkin Hollow and 'way beyond were there, and they were all talking pumpkin, even to the noisy, wide-eyed, wide-mouthed children, when Dad Adams and the Widow Moore came in to put a hush upon the assembly. The Widow Moore carried under each arm a generous crock, and Dad Adams carried a huge basket for her. Mrs. Zeke Harberry and Mrs. Hicks-with-the-wart-on-her-nose, self-constituted mistresses of the commissary, came forward at once to take the provisions. The basket proved to be heaped with big loaves of the fine home-made bread for which the Widow was famous.

"I just brought that along because I know'd there never was enough bread, everybody seemin' t' ruther bring cake; and I hope all you women folks did n't bring chicken salad, because I got a couple of crocks of it. Part of this salad is Dad Adams's contribution," she furthermore explained in a cheerful voice, and Dad grinned sheepishly. "Without

ever meanin' to a minute, he donated a couple o' tough old white game Leghorns."

The white Leghorns! *The white Leghorns!* The hush which had settled upon the assembly at the entrance of this mystery-shrouded pair deepened to a silence which positively palpitated. *The white Leghorns!* Did anybody ever hear the beat! How that woman could have been so bold as to bring those bewitched chickens over here, chopped up into a chicken salad, and expect folks to eat 'em! Mrs. Beezy and Mrs. Damm looked at each other appalled. Mrs. Tinker and Mrs. Purvis looked at each other stupefied. Mrs. Gollop and Sue Flanders looked at each other speechless. Mrs. Mealy Jones and Mrs. Williams looked at each other and gave up. Mrs. Harberry and Mrs. Hicks-with-the-wart-on-her-nose shrank back from the terrible crocks, and the Widow Moore herself, presently noticing the oversight, carried the salad back to the serving table which would, by and by, be Supervisor Stone's harness bench.

Always busy, she bustled in and ladled out the salad in saucers, calculating it nicely so that there would be plenty go around. The Widow Moore was famous for her chicken salad, and she was proud of it. She had not yet noticed that every one held aloof from her and from the fatal delicacy, when another diversion was made by the entrance of Etta Adams and Bob Moore, who carried between them a clothes basket from which, when the red table-cloth was taken off the top, Etta began to unload some of her famous pies. *Pumpkin pies!* Once more the good ladies of Pumpkin Hollow gave up.

Such a condition of affairs was bound sooner or later to come to a head. As the meal progressed, the Widow Moore grew more and more uneasy. Finally her voice arose above the din made by a myriad of flashing knives and forks and the babel of countless tongues.

"Say, you folks, why don't you taste that chicken salad?" she demanded. "I never was more surprised in my life than the way them tough old chickens of Dad Adams's cooked up. It's a heap better than a lot I've seen made out o' springers."

There was a tense silence. Sue Flanders, Long John's wife, stepped into the breach.

"You certainly could n't expect us, Mis' Moore, to eat salad made out o' witched chickens," she charged, trembling with indignation. "Them chickens was seen to stretch their necks and follow your forefinger right up through your window."

The Widow Moore gasped, and then she began to laugh, but no one laughed with her. Gazing up and down the long row of faces on the other side of the table, she saw nothing but vinegar.

"I declare to goodness I had really ought to let you keep on thinkin' your foolishness," she declared; "but if I did I suppose you'd try to

make a hangin' matter of it, so I reckon I'll have t' tell you how I witched them Leghorns."

She had the awe-stricken attention of every human being within earshot.

"You see, Dad Adams caught one o' my Brahma hens for trespassin' on his grounds, so I laid a trap for them game Leghorns," she went on. "I soaked some corn in peach brandy and sprinkled it out in my yard, and threw a few grains over Dad's fence. When them white Leghorns got a taste of that corn they came over into my yard to get the rest. But I had hooked small, fine fish-hooks through six o' them grains o' corn, and had strong black linen thread fastened to the hooks and wrapped around my finger. As soon as them Leghorns got the hooks in their craw, I gave a yank, and of course they stretched out their necks and come right through my window. That's how I witched 'em. I won't say as it was as fine-grained witchcraft as Granny Hooker's, but it was the kind that was plumb sure to work."

Dad Adams led the roar of laughter which followed this announcement. Then Dad, in huge admiration and good fellowship, slapped the Widow Moore heartily on the shoulder.

"You certainly do beat all," he said. "I'm willin' to give up the matter of the preacher. S'posin' we compromise and go to a squire."

"Hush!" said the Widow, coloring.

"Oh, jinks! I don't care if the whole crowd hears it! Say, you folks, the Widow Moore an' me's goin' t' get hitched one o' these days, jes' as soon as we can settle on some little differences there is betwixt us, an' I don't give a red cent who knows it!"

He hawhawed in huge enjoyment of the joke and at last the reserve give way. Even the women thawed now, because, after all was said and done, nearly everybody in Pumpkin Hollow liked both Dad Adams and the Widow Moore.

Dad could n't get over the Widow's cleverness.

"That's about the smartest thing I ever heard in my life," he kept on saying; then by and by: "An' I suppose that there pumpkin you was burnin' this afternoon was another of your tricks, eh?"

"No, that was just a bit of spite work to keep you guessin', I guess," explained the Widow, relenting a trifle.

At that moment something hard bounced on the floor and rolled over and over just behind Dad's chair. Everybody got up to look. It was a lopsided pumpkin, pale on the flat side, and it had a hole burned through the stem.

Out through the rear half-doors there flamed up a vivid yellow light, and a strong smell of sulphur floated in over the banquet table. That yellow flame and the rolling yellow smoke kept back a great deal of the pursuit, but Adams was of that temper which was not to be

balked by even visitors from the fiery regions. It was too late for him to overtake the tall black figure now flying down the road, but a stone can travel faster than a man, and Dad, spluttering with rage, picked one up and threw it. There was a howl, and the figure clapped its hand to the side of its head, but still ran on.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE LOVE POTIONS AT WORK

THE time had now come when half the people at the long table were moving sociably about, dropping down here and there to sit by the other half for a few minutes of chat. Now had come the time when the extra helpings of tea and coffee were beginning to be consumed by the bucketful, and now had come the time when Granny Hooker's cabalistic decoction was to be administered. Sissy Williams herself served Chip Rawson with his dose, and then she whipped off her apron and resigned the post of waitress to sit across the table from him with her eyes lowered. She was thus spared the pain of seeing that after Chip drank his cup of coffee he still gazed earnestly and anxiously in the direction of Etta Adams, whom Granny Hooker, bearing two cups of 'tea, was now approaching. Into one of those cups Chip himself, by Granny's contrivance, had just dropped his tiny phial of potent magic.

"Your tea's all cold, Miss Adams," she said. "I brought y' a fresh cup;" and, placing it at Etta's hand, she bore away the cold one. Then, taking her own tea to a vacant chair, she sat down to sip it with great satisfaction.

Chip Rawson looked on in an agony of suspense. Would Etta drink the tea? Bob Moore was not in sight. Etta was now chatting with young Preacher Appleyard, who alone of all that throng, outside of the Adamases and the Moores, was valiantly eating pumpkin pie, one slice after another, with a sublime disregard of consequences of any nature, whether spiritual or physical. He was casting sheep's eyes down at Etta Adams, if anything so dignified and circumspect as the glances he gave her could be designated by so flippant a name, for Preacher Appleyard, long-faced and side-burned and rail-thin, was very much in earnest. He had announced publicly, some time since, that he felt he needed a helpmate, and it has been noted of young ministers that they are as apt to select beautiful helpmates as are other men.

Etta Adams seemed much impressed by Preacher Appleyard's conversation, perhaps the more so that Bob Moore had reappeared and now stood across the table, glowering down upon her. Dad Adams came up and caught him by the right arm, lifted up his coat-sleeve, and deliberately smelled it.

"I thought I smelled a mighty strong smell of sulphur around your

neighborhood, Bob," he observed. "I reckon I'm on the track of them pumpkins at last."

Bob's eyes snapped.

"Just you keep right on a-follerin', Dad," he retorted. "I'm keepin' a mighty close eye on that colt o' mine that you're raisin'."

Etta Adams dropped a spoonful of sugar into her tea, and Chip Rawson wiped the perspiration from his hands. Etta, having stirred the sugar, forgot the tea. Preacher Appleyard had just made another joke. You could not tell it by his tone, you could not tell it from his countenance, you could not tell it from what he said, but you had an inscrutable feeling that it was a joke, and if you did n't laugh after a while he laughed for you; then you joined in, and he was happy until the next time.

Chip Rawson ranged his eyes up the table and back again in despair. Sissy Williams, lifting her lashes for a second, caught the sweep and flushed rosy red. Etta Adams poured cream into her tea. Chip Rawson mopped his forehead. Preacher Appleyard began to explain to Etta how handicapped an unmarried preacher was in his labors, and she listened most intently. Bob Moore was still glowering at her, but now he suddenly wheeled on his heel and strode down to where Hilda Yodler sat waiting.

Hilda, the youngest of the apple-cheeked Yodler girls, was still unattached, but Hilda was willing. Bob Moore was tall, Bob was handsome, Bob was curly-headed, Bob was strong, Bob was thrifty, Bob's mother had good property. Hilda did her best to entertain him.

Etta Adams grew suddenly weary of Preacher Appleyard, and presently she caught sight of Prudence Goody standing alone, eating an apple in contemplative silence and carefully saving the seeds. She had an urgent message she must deliver to Prudence Goody, and so she excused herself from Preacher Appleyard.

She was leaving her tea! Chip Rawson almost cried out to her to drink it. She hesitated, she turned back toward the table. No, she was only taking up her handkerchief. She turned away again, and almost years elapsed. Oh, joy! She was picking up the tea, she was drinking it, she was draining the cup to the dregs. She set it down hastily and ran away to join Prudence Goody, intending, by the way of Prudence and two or three others, to get back to Bob Moore; but that was no concern of Chip's. The tea had been drunk, the precious lotion was absorbed and might begin to become effective at any moment.

Chip grew limp in his relaxation from that awful tension, and, with a sigh of satisfaction, drew toward him a piece of pumpkin pie. As he lifted the first bite he caught Sissy Williams's eyes fixed in horror upon it. It flashed upon him at once that this was one of the Adamses' pumpkin pies, but he did not care. He only shook his head and smiled

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back at Sissy Williams that he was willing to die in the cause if need be. Sissy misunderstood the smile, and once more she blushed and lowered her lashes. Chip reflected idly that Sissy was a mighty good-looking girl, after all. She had on a new waist from Teetersburg, and wore a brand new jewelled comb in her heavy hair.

Having thus idly noticed Sissy, Chip Rawson went on placidly eating pumpkin pie. He consumed a second slice and a third. He noted with sudden jealousy that Preacher Appleyard was still at the same occupation. Just behind Chip now was Etta Adams; she had moved on down from Prudence Goody to Ella Hemp, that much nearer to Bob Moore. Not that she wanted to speak to *him* by any manner of means! She merely wanted to tell Hilda Yodler something.

"Miss Adams," said Chip Rawson in a good, loud voice, "I wish you'd bring me another piece of your pumpkin pie. It's the best pie I ever et."

Preacher Appleyard looked at him in dismay. He also would have liked to ask for another piece, but to save himself he could not. He already felt himself turning yellow. Etta came close and examined the edge of the crust which lay upon Chip's plate.

"Glad you like that pie; it's some of Mis' Harberry's. I'll bring you some more of it;" and away she went for it.

Preacher Appleyard smiled beatifically. He was quite sure of his pie. Etta herself had passed upon the validity of each piece that he had eaten. Etta came back with a generous yellow triangle for the forlorn Chip. An ordinary person could scarcely have refused it after having been so enthusiastic about it, but Chip was equal to the occasion.

"I don't want that pie," he said. "I thought this was your'n. That's what made it taste so good. Say, Etta, bend down a little."

Etta bent down.

"Say, you don't feel anything, do you?"

"Don't what?" she asked.

"You don't feel kind o' funny any way, do you?"

Etta looked at him in amazement.

"You been drinkin' anything?" she demanded.

"No, indeed," said he. "Oh, just a little sip o' Cap Peek's hard cider about an hour ago."

"You'd better leave Cap Peek's hard cider alone," she admonished him severely. "Do you want this piece o' pie or don't you?"

"No, I could n't eat it. It don't look like a good piece o' pie to me, anyhow."

"I feel bad about that," she returned. "I think myself this is one of the best pies I made in that batch. Mis' Harberry's was all out;" and she slipped away with it.

Chip was crestfallen, but not so much as might be expected.

"It ain't started workin' yet," he consoled himself.

Etta, strolling unconcernedly by on the other side, a moment later, merely happened to notice Hilda Yodler.

"Why, how-de-do, Hilda?" greeted Etta, extending her hand cordially. "I hardly knew you, you've grow'd to be such a big girl. I'm coming out to your house some time next week, and I'm going to bring some fine worsted scraps I found, too, for that big doll I saw you playin' with out there this summer. How's your Ma?"

"She did n't come over to-day," Hilda half spat, and Etta Adams passed on serenely.

Bob Moore politely choked himself as long as he could stand it, and then, untrained to the ways of polite society, he broke into a hearty laugh and arose to follow Etta.

In the meantime old Granny Hooker sat by herself with a mighty problem upon her. She had drunk her tea in peaceful contemplation, but there was a queer after-taste, which, by and by, she recognized as the unmistakable flavor of rose leaves. She examined her cup and saucer with minute care. She crossed her arms meditatively, trying to figure out how she had set down that cup of tea for Etta Adams. Finally, putting two and two together, they made the inevitable four, and Granny Hooker sank back in horror.

"Drat it! If I did n't drink Etta Adams's love potion!" she groaned.

She had scarcely more than convinced herself of the awful truth when another possibility burst upon her and stupefied her! What if it should take effect! She ceased all her functions in order to hark to the workings of her inmost soul. Granny Hooker, be it said, had an intense faith in her own magic, and by and by she was certain that she felt the beginnings of a dawning admiration for Chip Rawson. She looked over at him. He was contemplatively gazing across at Sissy Williams, who sat patiently with her eyes closed. His small frame began to assume heroic proportions in Granny Hooker's eyes. Really, Granny felt quite young again. She stopped for a long time in silent communion with herself, listening to those inner whisperings, standing by, as it were, amazed at the growth of a mighty emotion which she had considered long, long since dead.

The more she thought of it, the more it grew, and finally she felt herself possessed of a wild, mad infatuation for peerless Chip Rawson. Chip was still engaged in mild contemplation when suddenly Granny Hooker fell upon him with both arms around his neck.

"Oh, Chip, Chip dear!" she screamed, so that all assembled Pumpkin Hollow heard it and turned astounded. "I can't help it, Chip, you're so handsome!"

In an instant the Union Sociable was in a blaze of excitement

seldom equalled and never surpassed in the annals of Hickoryville. The horror of Chip was pathetic as he realized to the full the after-significance of the frail burden which clung upon him. His mind grasped the misery of the days to come, when Fatty Hicks and Lafe Hardy and Mealy Jones and Hen Damm and Jake Purvis and Jud Beezy, and all the other noted wits who infested his place of business, would remind him of this miserable moment. He changed seven colors in seven seconds, and while he tugged hopelessly and helplessly to remove Granny Hooker's scrawny arms from his collar, he examined the floor desperately for a knot-hole of almost any size to sink through.

It was Sissy Williams, bless her, who created a diversion. While assembled Pumpkin Hollow gasped with astonishment, Sissy Williams gasped with indignation. Her righteous anger at this double dealing made her for the moment forget her maiden modesty, made her forget the presence of Chip Rawson, made her forget the presence of all Pumpkin Hollow; she saw before her only Granny Hooker and her deep duplicity.

"Mis' Hooker," she screamed, "you're an all 'round fraud! I don't reckon that stuff you give me t' put in Chip Rawson's tea was any more than just plain water."

Even through his agony Chip Rawson heard and was dazed beyond comprehension. The fact that any woman, even cross-eyed Sissy Williams, would go to the trouble of putting a love potion into the drink that he drank or the food that he ate was a novelty so startling that he could not comprehend it; for, in spite of his ambitions, Chip was a modest man.

"In my tea?" he said incredulously. "You don't mean to say it was a love mixture, Sissy?"

Sissy Williams dropped her eyes.

"I ain't a-goin' t' tell, Chip," she said shyly.

Cool determination came to Chip. He too had been hoodwinked. His commercial sense came to the aid of his personal discomfiture, and he had no difficulty now in setting Granny Hooker upon the bench.

"Mis' Hooker," he said, shaking his finger in her face, "all 'round fraud is right. Any goods you get out o' Rawson's General Merchandise Store and Post Office is goin' t' be strictly cash for the rest of your days!"

CHAPTER IX.

THE GHOST THAT GRUNTED

DAD ADAMS next morning picked up the usual pumpkin from the front porch. He was a thrifty man and saw no reason why these pumpkins should be wasted, so he took this one out in the back lot and cut it up for his cows. Granny Hooker saw him do it and predicted the

instant death of the cattle. Dad saw Bob Moore, with overalls and jumper over his Sunday clothes, out greasing his buggy in front of the barn, and wandered casually over to the fence. Bob had a raw red scar just above his ear.

"Mornin', Bob," Dad said with suspicious cordiality.

"Mornin', Father," replied Bob with equal friendliness.

"Thought you'd come 'round," commented Dad, apropos of the implied relationship. "Which Friday is it t' be?"

"The Friday you buy a lucky charm from Gran' Hooker," grinned Bob.

"Uh-huh," grunted Dad. "Who you been fightin' with?"

Bob unconsciously raised his hand to his head and gave the big red spot a gentle pressure.

"It were n't no fight," said Bob placidly. "I got that lick from foolin' with a jackass."

A great retort occurred to Dad Adams. He pondered it for a moment or two. A slowly dawning grin of appreciation wreathed his features, making sharp crow's feet across the corners of his eyes and puckering little dents at the base of his nose. Suddenly he raised both hands to the sides of his head, and, putting his thumbs in his ears, began to wave his fingers.

"Hee-haw!" he bellowed in the conventional imitation of a bray, then wound up with a nasal "haw-haw-haw," and walked away.

He chuckled till church time over that joke. He told Etta about it, and she laughed. He told the Widow Moore about it, and she laughed. After church he told Jake Purvis and Jud Beezy and Fatty Hicks and Chip Rawson and Mealy Jones, and they all laughed, and every time they saw Bob Moore they put their hands to their ears and said, "Hee-haw!" and laughed uproariously. It takes only a small jest to go a great ways in a town like Hickoryville, because there are not so many. Even in the great outside world there are only seven fundamental jokes. A new world must be discovered and conquered before we may have any more. Through the medium of this great quip, however, it became pretty generally known that Dad Adams more than suspected Bob Moore of being the perpetrator of the entire pumpkin outrage. The men of Hickoryville were inclined, with the circumstantial evidence at hand, to accept Dad's view of the matter, but the gentler sex, to a woman, held to Granny Hooker's varying versions. By the conversion of the men, however, Bob Moore suddenly found himself a hero among the patriots on Chip Rawson's porch and around his fire-side. When taxed with having worked the stupendous pumpkin hoax on Dad Adams, he only grinned; he neither affirmed nor denied, nor would he admit that the scar on his head had been placed there by the sure aim of his prospective father-in-law.

The Forty-Third Pumpkin

Bob's mental process was slow, and it took him two days to arrive at the definite conclusion that "so long as he had the name, he might as well have the game." In those two days there had been no cessation of the morning pumpkins upon Dad Adams's porch.

Along about ten o'clock of the night of that second day, Dad, who, in his stockinged feet, was absorbing the news from last week's *Clarion* with great relish, heard a noise in his barn. Old Sal was doing her best to kick holes in the wall back of her stall. There was a place on Sal's off-flank where the mere touch of a straw would make steel springs out of her hind legs. It was a particularly susceptible tickle spot, and everybody knew about it. Sal might be so twisted in her stall that something pressed upon this spot, and Dad, lighting the lantern, hurried out to keep the valued mare from kicking herself to death.

In the barn he peered about him cautiously. The kicking had stopped as he opened the door, and now he walked slowly down between the fronts of the stalls and the hay-mow on the other side. As he neared Sal's stall, a tall, white-robed figure arose from behind the corn-sheller, and for a moment Dad, for the first time in his life, felt a peculiar chilly feeling at the roots of his hair, while little pin-points seemed to prickle all over his stiff cheeks.

"Thom-as!" groaned a sepulchral voice, drawling out each syllable separately and distinctly. It was a voice like the moaning of the winter night's wind, a solemn voice, a blood-curdling voice, a voice such as a voice from the grave should be—except for a slight nasal twang! This last reassured Dad Adams a trifle.

"Get out o' my barn!" he ordered.

His own voice had not quite the firmness and sureness that he would have preferred it to have, but the sound of it reassured him just a little bit more. The tall, white-robed figure slowly glided forward another step.

"Thom-as Jeff-er-son Ad-ams," groaned the voice again, "on-less you see the er-ror of your ways, pre-pare to meet thy doom!"

The nasal twang was more distinguishable than ever. Dad took a firmer grip of his lantern.

"You go to blazes!" he roared, and threw the lantern straight at the figure.

Had the visitor been of the ghostly character it represented itself to be, the lantern, of course, would have gone straight through it, and then Dad Adams would have taken to his heels—if his knees had let him. Instead, however, the lantern landed with a thump right in the very midst of the ghost's anatomy, and a very unghostlike grunt followed. That grunt was the best sound Dad had heard since entering the barn. The light of the lantern had gone out when it hit the floor, but there was sufficient light from the open door for him to distinguish

the tall, white-robed figure, and he sprang for it, nothing made of mere flesh and blood and bones being able to balk Dad Adams for one moment. His intent as he sprang had been to grip the ghost just under the chin with both hands and give it a good choking, but two strong, vise-like hands caught his outreaching arms at the wrists and held him off. Four biceps were strained to their utmost, two backs curved and bent, four sturdy legs were strained tense and taut, where they braced against the floor; but nothing gave way.

Dad suddenly gave a backward jerk, and the ghost tumbled forward, the wrist-holds dropped loose, the ghost landed on the floor, and Dad landed on the ghost. It was not a passive figure which lay underneath him, however, but an intensely active figure, with muscles like steel, and before Dad could do any execution whatever, the figure was on its back and had wound two long arms around Dad in a bear-like hug. They rolled over and over on the floor, and bumped their legs against stalls and barrels and boxes, while old Dick whinnied and Fan kicked the side of the barn. Old Sal merely munched hay. It was quite evident that Sal had been tickled on the off-flank with the express intent of attracting attention.

Both Dad and the ghost began to feel an intense respect for their respective opponents, but neither dared give way, though their breath came like the sharp exhausts of a gasoline engine. A yellow light flashed in at the open barn door, bobbing and flaring and shifting until, as it came nearer, its glare flooded the barn, and Etta Adams stood in the door with a lamp in her hand. Her first impulse was to run and scream for help, but as she turned to do so the lamp-light glowed upon an upturned face which she knew. It was the face of Bob Moore, protruding from shredded masses of the white sheet which had enveloped his form, and at that moment he was in a sitting posture, both his hands gripped in the lapels of Dad Adams's coat, while Dad, with his back to the door, was also in a sitting posture and had both hands gripped in the lapels of Bob Moore's coat. Their legs were sprawled in four different directions, and it was impossible to tell, from a little distance, which legs were whose. The combatants were not saying anything, they were not moving, they were simply holding to each other, staring each other in the eyes and gasping for breath.

Etta took in these details at a glance, and understood. Near the contestants lay a great golden pumpkin with a little round hole burned through its stem, and upon this convenient seat she dropped, and, placing the lamp upon the floor and locking her hands upon her knees, she laughed until her jaws ached and the tears rolled down her cheeks. Sheepishly Bob Moore let go with one hand. Sheepishly Dad Adams left go with one hand. Bob Moore released his other hand. Dad Adams released his other hand. Bob Moore whirled slowly around,

facing Etta Adams; Dad Adams did likewise. They looked for the moment very much like two small boys who had been caught stealing jam. Etta, still unable to talk, pointed an accusing finger at them.

"Huh—huh—huh—huh," Dad gasped, "huh—he tried to—whew!—play ghost; but—huh—huh—he forgot there ain't no Moore dead or alive could ever skeer an Adams."

"Huh—huh—huh—he found out—whew!—there ain't no Adams dead or alive could ever lick a Moore," replied Bob, the first to scramble to his feet.

The sheet, originally a nice, clean one from the Widow Moore's well kept stores, hung in ragged and grimy strings about him. The contrast of what he must have looked like when he started out and what he looked like now struck Etta's quick imagination with such vivid force that she clasped her hands on her sides and laughed again until she was afraid she might break something. Dad, still seated on the floor and pawing for air, looked up and at last saw Bob with his daughter's eyes. He also got up and leaned against old Fan's stall to laugh.

"Ghost!" he gasped. "*Ghost!*"

Slowly he lifted his thumbs to his ears, slowly he waved his hands, and then, with the first good, round breath which he had been able to coax into his lungs, he shouted out the most rasping "hee-haw" that he could command, then resigned himself again to unconquerable mirth.

The joke was all on Bob Moore, and Bob, realizing it, was stung to the quick. The very pumpkin upon which Etta still sat to laugh out her laugh was yet another mute evidence of his failure.

"That's a mighty natural hee-haw, Dad," he snorted savagely. "All you need to do now is to back up into that empty stall and munch hay, to be a real, sure-enough jackass."

Retorts in Hickoryville never had any weight, since it was only the original joke which counted and never died. Dad Adams paid no attention to the rejoinder. He merely put his thumbs to his ears and waved his hands again, and treated Bob to another "hee-haw." Bob strode angrily to the door.

"Take your pumpkin with you, young Hee-haw!" Dad yelled after him.

Bob merely slipped out into the night, feeling entirely out of retorts for the time being, and by no means soothed that, as he climbed over the fence, he heard a fresh peal of laughter from Etta Adams.

So far as Dad was concerned, the mystery was cleared away. He rather wondered next morning, it is true, that the fifteenth pumpkin should be on his front porch after Bob's discomfiture of the night before, and that on the following morning the sixteenth should be found sunning itself in the selfsame spot.

For the time being, however, he resolved to let the pumpkins accumulate, if they were bound to come, and feed them to his cattle, and in the meantime he would take under advisement some sort of a plot to put an everlasting quietus on Bob Moore's new obsession for uncanny jokes. That day, however, Bob Moore was served with jury papers by Sheriff Hank Teasewater, and had to go over to the county seat at Teetersburg, where it was a certainty that he would be kept under the stern eye of the law for more than a week. Dad Adams breathed more freely as he saw Bob being driven away in the custody of the sheriff. The pumpkin joke was becoming tiresome.

It was with actual satisfaction amounting almost to intoxicating exhilaration, that Dad Adams came out of his kitchen door on the following morning and strolled peacefully and calmly out to his front gate. He even cast a more or less triumphant glance at the front porch as he passed, but as he did so his jaw fell and his eyes bulged. There, in the usual place and fairly winking at him under the radiance from the morning sun, stood a bigger pumpkin than ever, and it had a hole burned through the stem!

CHAPTER X.

THE MYSTERY DEEPENS

Two days more passed by, and Dad spent most of that time in a panic of mental reconstruction, for it is a very difficult matter, after one has slowly built up a firm conviction in one's mind, to tear it all down and start with a fresh set of theories. Dad had tidings from Teetersburg. Bob Moore's jury had a case turned over to them on the first morning, and had been under lock and key ever since, night and day. Clearly, therefore, Bob could not have come back to place those pumpkins on Dad's front porch.

In the afternoon, Dad slipped up to Etta's room to examine its modes of egress. It was a neat, clean little room in the front gable end, and it had dormer windows on the sides. There were no windows in the front, for the porch came up there, and, to make sure of the dormers, he made an excuse that he wanted to fix the eaves that afternoon; while he was at it, he tucked a couple of stout nails into the outside of each sash, making it impossible to open them from the inside. He assured himself of this perfectly, and sat up that night quite late, two or three times slipping upstairs in his stockinged feet to listen outside Etta's door. It was nearly eleven o'clock before he was satisfied that she was sound asleep, and then he softly locked the door upon her and left the key sticking in the outside. Moreover, he put a wire around the door knob and brought the ends of it down through the handle of the key.

For many years he had called Etta, along about daybreak, to get breakfast for him, this being his first waking act every morning, but this time he waited long enough to hurry outside to see if there was a pumpkin on the front porch. There was! He went around both sides of the house and looked up at the windows. From where he stood on the ground, he could easily see the stout nails with which he had fastened each window. None of them had been disturbed. He went back into the house and slipped up to Etta's door. The key was still in it, and the wire which had been wrapped around the door knob still had its ends running down through the handle of the key. Obviously Etta was not the one. Softly he took off the wire, softly he unlocked the door, softly he slipped out the key and stuffed it in his pocket, and then he pounded on the panel in his usual peremptory fashion, although a trifle louder than usual. Etta answered him sleepily, and a moment afterward he could hear her hurrying to get his breakfast with the same old familiar sounds of prompt and cheerful dressing, and his heart smote him for his ungenerous suspicions.

But who the Dickens, then, did put the pumpkins there? That evening, after his regular day's work was done, Dad went out to the barn and mixed a can of gray paint such as the porch had been painted with every spring since it had been put up, only this time he put in no drier whatever. He put in plenty of sticky varnish instead, and while Etta was up calling on Sissy Williams he gave the porch floor and steps two swift but thick coats of paint.

From across the street, to see a dark figure bent over and moving about so vigorously right after dusk is a very mysterious thing, especially to eyes which require spectacles, and that swaying motion would not suggest painting even to one so perspicacious as Granny Hooker. What had Dad Adams been doing over there? She knew that it must be Dad. She could tell that from his unmistakable gait as he walked around the side of the house and sat down in the kitchen to read, and wait, and drag through the time until bed-time, so that he could go to sleep, and wake up in the morning and find tell-tale tracks upon his front porch.

Chip Rawson strolled down the street by and by, and stood in front of the Adams gate a long time, making up his mind. Presently he put his hand upon the latch, then he took it away again. He turned and walked back a few steps toward the store. He stopped and pondered, he went back again to the gate with a firmer stride, he opened the latch and walked in, then, closing the gate gently behind him, leaned against it for another period of thought and decision. At last he walked back along the side of the house toward the only light that was visible, the one which streamed from the kitchen windows, and, examining the interior of the kitchen through the window, was somewhat relieved to

find that Dad was all alone, being thereby emboldened to knock upon the door.

"Come in!" invited Dad. Chip Rawson walked in. "Hello, Chip," said Dad. "Set."

"Ain't got much time," said Chip.

He held his hat in his hand. It was a brand new hat, such as they were wearing in the cities, a soft felt hat with a high crown and a broad stiff brim. He examined the hat carefully. He turned it over and looked on the inside. He passed the brim around and around in his hand.

"Fine weather," he observed.

"I dunno," said Dad. "We'd ought to have snow by this time. I like an early winter. This is too open. Why, it's almost picnic weather. If we don't get snow on the wheat mighty soon, we'll have no crops at all next spring."

"It is kind o' measly weather if you look at it that way," agreed Chip.

He looked down at his vest and picked an invisible thread from it. It was a yellow vest, with little red flowers in it. He moistened his thumb and forefinger and ran it down the crease of his trousers. They were very light gray trousers with a lemon-colored pin stripe in them, made to order. Chip had all his clothes made to order in the city; a new suit every spring and fall when he went to buy goods for the store. Dad looked him over with a shrewd eye, from his red "made" cravat to his patent-leather tips.

"Etta ain't in," he observed. "She went up to gab a while with Sissy Williams."

"Oh," rejoined Chip Rawson faintly. A young man who, in business, had a nerve which never faltered, who would pursue an escaping copper cent through fire and flood and pillage and come back home with it tightly buttoned in his pocket, he was here without speech.

Dad Adams offered him no help. Dad turned calmly back to his perusal of last week's *Clarion*. He had long since finished the crop reports, the slashing editorials on "Are We a Republic?" the local items, the telegraphic news, and the advertisements, and now, in sheer desperation, he was reading the continued story. Chip Rawson took from his pocket a snow white handkerchief with a pink edge, carefully dusted the imaginary thread from his waistcoat, pursued an escaping dust particle down the seams of both trousers, and gave a final flick to his patent leather tips. Still Dad Adams read on.

Chip cleared his throat.

"Good-evenin'," he said.

"Good-evenin'," said Dad, and Chip backed himself out of the kitchen door, closing it behind him so gently that it was only by the

rasp of the lock that Dad Adams was sure it was shut. He waited until Chip's footsteps had passed the kitchen window, and then he allowed himself the pleasure of a snicker.

While there was a certain degree of timidity about Chip Rawson, there was also a greater degree of persistence, so the young man strode out around to the front of the house and sat down on the porch to wait. It was perhaps an hour later that the sound of merry voices aroused him. Etta Adams had come home, and Sissy Williams was with her. Chip, who had observed men and manners with vast interest on all his city trips, arose hastily to greet them; rather, that is what Chip intended to do, but something other than his diffidence held him back. An hour is a long time to sit quietly on a freshly painted porch step, in light gray trousers which have a lemon-colored pin-stripe in them. Chip made another attempt, and the failure of it was a splendid tribute to the quality of varnish which Dad Adams had put in the paint. The two girls were chatting so volubly that they did not notice the struggling figure on the porch steps. The gate had clicked from the inside now, the latch was open, the girls passed out, and the gate clicked once more. Sissy having brought Etta home, it was now Etta's turn to take Sissy home.

Chip breathed a sigh of relief. He did not at all care to meet the two girls together, and there was another reason why he would prefer to be alone for a while, at least. If Etta took Sissy home, there would be at least an interval of fifteen minutes before Sissy would bring Etta home again, and with careful manipulation much might be done in fifteen minutes. Fate, however, willed that this program was not to be carried out. Etta caught her skirt in the gate, turned back to loosen it, and so saw Chip. She stood a moment and tried to make him out. He was not big enough for Bob Moore nor black enough for Preacher Appleyard. She tripped inside the gate and up close enough to recognize the caller.

"Why, it's Granny Hooker's beau!" she exclaimed delightedly. "Come in, Siss. Why, howdy-do, Chip?" and she shook hands with him most cordially. "You're on the wrong side of the street, ain't you?"

Chip squirmed.

"I was just in to have a little chat with your father, Miss Adams," he perspiringly observed. "Pleasant weather, is n't it?"

"Very," she replied, "but it's a little cold and damp to be sitting out on porches all by yourself. I'm so glad you happened in, though, because now you can take Siss home. She's afraid to go by herself."

"Oh, I ain't!" protested Sissy, waiting eagerly, nevertheless.

"Why—I—I—certainly, with pleasure," replied Chip, leaning cautiously sideways.

There was a slight rustling sound audible only to the strained ears of Chip. He was sure that one edge of the fastened cloth was coming away from the paint, and he tried the other edge a little. Heavens, what a relief! That edge, too, seemed to be loosening. If he could only be alone two minutes longer! A happy inspiration came to him. He cleared his throat.

"Goodness!" he said huskily. "I'm 'most choking for a drink. Would you mind going back and getting me a tin cup of water, Miss Adams?"

"Why, certainly," she said. "Come right along back to the pump;" and, reaching down, she caught hold of his hand.

There was nothing for Chip Rawson to do but to get up, and he gave one despairing heave. There was a sharp, crackling, tearing sound, and then Chip yelled, "Paint!" and backed toward the gate. He backed himself out of it, and then, embarrassment and confusion claiming him altogether for their own, he broke and ran, and the girls, looking up the street after him, and screaming with the most aggravating variety of laughter, distinguished a bright white spot just about in the geometrical centre of his figure.

Etta went straight in the house and brought her father out with the lantern. On the second step from the bottom they found a patch of slate gray goods with a lemon-colored pin-stripe in it, and Dad was so pleased that he escorted Sissy Williams and his daughter up to the Williams gate, and on the way back with Etta he promised her a new dress if she would take that sample of cloth up to Rawson's store and inquire for goods like it.

This incident, while a diversion, had nothing to do with the main purpose of the paint on the porch. In the morning the pumpkin was there as usual, but there were other marks besides the one which Chip Rawson had made. There were foot-prints upon all three of the steps. The foot-prints were short and broad, and in the sole of the right foot was a cross made with cobbler nails. There were other women than Granny Hooker, perhaps, who wore that potent charm against the evil spirits which ride on midnight winds, but they were not likely to make tracks directly across the road to Granny Hooker's house. Of course those latter tracks might have been made at any time, for Granny Hooker usually crossed the road to come up on the Adams side, where the path was better, especially in rainy weather, but when Dad followed the tracks he found where Granny Hooker, feeling the weight and pull of something sticky on her shoe-soles, had scraped her feet on the dead, dry grass, with the result of scraping off most of the accumulated dust, which was rolled into little cylinders of gray paint. On her own gate step was a print of gray, and on her porch were two or three more. Dad was now convinced beyond all reasonable doubt that the pumpkins

had been deposited there by Granny Hooker herself, and he stayed convinced until after two days later when Granny Hooker, having prowled about too much on a chill, raw night preceding, caught a violent cold and was confined to her bed for two days, on both mornings of which the usual pumpkins were found upon his own front porch, each with a little round hole burned through the stem.

CHAPTER XI.

DAD ADAMS IS MARRIED

THE elimination of Granny Hooker from pumpkin possibilities was the last straw, and exasperated Dad beyond endurance. To add to his aggravation, the twenty-fifth pumpkin bore upon its smooth yellow side seared lines made evidently with some scorching hot implement—with the tip of a fiery tail, Granny Hooker would have said; but whatever might have been the agency which put the lines there, the fact was that, though extremely faint, they formed the outlines of a grotesque face, in which might be traced, by a great stretch of the imagination, a rudely made caricature of Dad Adams himself. The goatee was unmistakable. For the first time since the persecution had begun, Dad broke his reserve, threw discipline to the winds, and turned to Etta for consultation. He received instead but gibes and laughter, so he went out, slamming the kitchen door after him.

Over on her own kitchen steps the Widow Moore was cleaning a chicken for to-morrow's Sunday dinner. Bob would be home that evening. The Widow was wearing one of Bob's caps, with the flaps pulled down over her ears, for the wind was rather brisk. Her hair was done up in a loose knot which left a roll to mash out from underneath the edge of the cap at the back of her neck, but even so it was not untidy; and the waving strands which straggled out at the sides and front and back of the cap were bright and glossy, while the Widow Moore's face was plump and pink and her complexion was as clear as any girl's. Notwithstanding the cold, her sleeves were rolled up to the elbows, and her arms, though red with the hot water and the cold air, were plump and round and at the same time graceful. Around her neck she wore a little red shawl, but it was open at the throat, and she had no collar on her calico wrapper. There was that about the freedom of her attitude, too, which indicated that just now she wore no stays. A black apron with chicken feathers freezing against it was tied about her waist. On the nail beside her was one of Bob's coats, which she had just worn on her trip to the barn.

Dad, by an irresistible attraction similar to that of gravitation, approached the fence. "Fine, crisp mornin'," he observed.

"You bet," replied the Widow Moore. "It's too fine a mornin' t' be slammin' kitchen doors."

"It's my kitchen door," he reminded her.

"It's a good thing it is. You would n't slam mine that way," replied the Widow.

"I would if I wanted to, if your door was my door," he informed her.

"Only once," she told him.

"Why don't you try it and see?" he invited.

"I declare I never saw a man hold on to a joke so long as you do," the Widow retorted, holding up the chicken and turning it around and around to see if by any chance one solitary pin-feather had escaped her.

"I mean every word of it, as sure as you're born," Dad replied with an earnestness which was scarcely to be doubted. "Go in and get on your duds and we'll drive right over to Teetersburg and get married by the squire; and I give you my word this ain't any unlucky day or anything like that."

The Widow Moore shook her head.

"No," she said; "I dressed up once to go with you and get married, and I said I'd never do it again; and you know the Moores. They certainly do keep their word."

"Oh, shucks! You don't have to dress up. I'll take you just the way you are right now."

The Widow Moore looked him squarely in the eye.

"You daresn't do it," she said.

"I'll be out in front with Dick and Fan in five minutes," he declared.

The Widow Moore ran her hands down over her arms to scrape off the feathers.

"I don't mind washin' my hands and rollin' down my sleeves," she conceded, "but that's as far as I'll go in the way of fixin' up."

"Just as you are, just as you are," Dad insisted, and started back for the barn.

The Widow Moore looked after him quizzically; then, as she noted the firmness of Dad's stride and the unbending intent which drove him on, she smiled, and, setting her lips, ran into the house. She took off the cap and little red shawl; she scrubbed her face and hands and arms most vigorously; she smoothed her hair; then she ran up to her room, took out a pretty lace collar and tried it around her neck. It made the rest of her dress look too shabby. She folded a white silk handkerchief and tried that around her neck. Suddenly she threw that down, too.

"Just as I am," she declared, and smiled back at herself in the glass.

A contest for supremacy between her and Dad Adams would be an

interesting one, she admitted even to herself, but she was calm in her confidence. She ran back down-stairs again, and knotted the little red shawl once more around her neck, but she knotted it more carefully, and, really, it had almost a coquettish air when she was through with it. She put on Bob's cap exactly as she had worn it before, but she was very particular about the rolls and waves of hair which peeped out around her face and at the base of her neck. She took off the soiled black apron and donned a clean one which had a wide hem stretching around it; viewed this, however, almost with suspicion; but on second thought she reflected that Dad would never know the difference anyhow, and kept it on. Her shoes Dad could not have seen. They were a pair of Bob's, so she changed those, and when Dad's voice yelled, "Whoa!" she came to the front door.

At his first sight of her he smiled grimly. "Just as she was," true enough, but, nevertheless, he noted the little differences which she had thought might escape him. He had plenty of time to examine the slight changes in detail, for the Widow herself was busy with a new train of thought. Dad had hitched up Dick and Fan to the hay-wagon! For only one second was the Widow Moore nonplussed, and then she sallied calmly down the walk and out at the gate with as much ease of manner as if Dad had come to get her in a coach-and-four. Dad, with as much gallantry as he had ever exhibited when a boy of twenty, stood at the side of the wagon, holding the lines, and helped her up over the wheel with great care; then he sat down beside her, and they drove off toward Teetersburg.

Granny Hooker, perched in her big arm-chair by the window, was never more impatient with her convalescence. In fancy, she was already transporting herself in a hurry up the street to consult with Mrs. Purvis and Mrs. Beezy and Mrs. Damm and Mrs. Tinker and Mrs. Hicks-with-the-wart-on-her-nose. But she had no need to worry. Mrs. Purvis was just going up to Chip Rawson's store for three cents' worth of pepper, and the news was as good as told, even had not Mrs. Beezy been out bringing in an arm-load of wood, or Mrs. Tinker washing her front windows, or Mrs. Damm, whose husband was the blacksmith, fixing the hinges of her gate, or Mrs. Jones and Mrs. Hicks discussing Sissy Williams at Mrs. Hicks's door, where Mrs. Jones had been saying good-by for the last half-hour.

The Widow Moore did not turn her head. She knew perfectly well that Granny Hooker was straining her eyes against the window-pane to see as far up the street as she could; that Mrs. Purvis had stopped squarely in her tracks; that Mrs. Beezy and Mrs. Tinker and Mrs. Damm and Mrs. Hicks and Mrs. Jones were all leaning over the fences, and that every neck would be craned after her until Dad Adams's hay-wagon was clear out of sight up the dusty road. Such a set of cir-

cumstances was quite likely to make conversation constrained for a time, and so the two on the wagon talked of nothing but the falling of snow that was in the air and their hopes for the sort of winter which would make a good spring and good crops; but Dad, his eyes roaming over the bare fields, presently chuckled. The Widow Moore, inspecting the fields on her side of the road with equal interest, also chuckled, then they turned to each other and chuckled in concert. Dad's eyes were aflame.

"Give me a buss, Jennie," he demanded.

"I don't care if I do," she replied, and pursed up her lips.

Dad paused a moment to admire them. Really, it was a pretty mouth and set in a good, wholesome, nice-looking face. The eyes which were turned up to him were clear and steady, and he knew, all the while of him, that they could be trusted. The kiss that he gave her was a smack of the loudest and crudest, but so long as it was perfectly satisfactory to them it is nobody else's business.

It was not the last one on that ride to Teetersburg, but even critical judges of such things would not say that this feature of the ride was really overdone, and it was an eminently pleased couple which appeared before Squire Bumpus and got married by the shortest known form, from which the word "obey" was entirely eliminated by consent of both parties.

The ride home, after a futile search for Bob Moore, was no less joyous. Dad Adams was as a boy just let out of school. He laughed, he talked, he sang; he snapped his whip; he gave hilarious greetings to every equipage they met upon the road, and the lumbering hay-wagon was transformed into a triumphal chariot. The road was strewn with blossoms, the withered hedge-rows were gay with bright flowers, the sun smiled on fields of waving, ripened grain, and the sunshine itself was pure gold, while the wintry breeze which swept down upon them was spiced with the sweet perfume of far-off Araby. Dad Adams was renewing his youth. Every now and then he patted the plump hand of Jennie Adams or impulsively squeezed it.

Mrs. Beezy was the first one to see them driving into town. She almost ran up the road to be the first to greet them.

"Where you been?" she demanded.

"Gettin' married," said Dad complacently.

"For the land's sake!" exclaimed Mrs. Beezy, and fell back.

Had Mrs. Adams looked back, she would have seen Mrs. Beezy zigzagging across the road with all the fervor of a robin after a nervous bug, carrying the news to Mrs. Purvis and Mrs. Tinker and Mrs. Damm and Mrs. Jones and Mrs. Rawson and Mrs. Hicks-with-the-wart-on-her-nose. It was left to faithful little Sissy Williams to carry the news, last of all in the village, to neglected Granny Hooker. Granny, how-

ever, had something else to divert her when Dad Adams paused before the wide gate which led up to his barn. Jennie Adams stopped him with a word.

"Where you goin'?" she inquired.

"To drive in home," he replied.

"In there? I guess not," she said. "We're goin' t' live in my house. It's the biggest and the best."

"I guess not," retorted Dad. "Mrs. Jennie Adams is going to live in the Adams house."

"Mrs. Jennie Adams," replied that lady, with firmness and decision, "is going to live in the house where she has always lived. This house was built for me. I planned every room in it myself. It's exactly the sort of a house I like, and there I'm going to stay."

She had taken the lines from Dad, and now she clicked up the horses and stopped them in front of her own gate, not more than two rods away. She climbed down to open it, but Dad Adams was at the bits of the horses.

"You ain't goin' t' drive my horses in your barn," he objected.

"They're as much mine as they are your'n," the new Mrs. Adams informed him.

"Yes, but I'm the boss of 'em," he declared.

"Take 'em," she said, and strolled on to the little gate which opened upon the Moore front walk. "If you feel like comin' over for supper, you'll be perfectly welcome."

"Supper, Mrs. Adams, will be got ready in the Adams house at half past five."

Granny Hooker nearly fretted herself to death that she could not hear, in addition to merely seeing, this controversy. The inexplicable pantomime nearly aggravated her into a fever, and when she saw the Widow Moore walk up to her own front door, walk in, and slam it behind her, and saw Dad Adams drive his horses up to his own barn and drive them in, and later stalk into his own kitchen and slam the door of that, she actually wept.

CHAPTER XII.

A DIVIDED SHIVAREE

DAD walked into the kitchen, where his daughter was preparing the evening meal.

"Etta," he observed by way of breaking the news, "I wish you'd stir around and get up a mighty good weddin' supper this evenin'; and you might step over to the old Moore house and ask your Ma what she'd like."

Etta finished in silence the peeling of the potato she then held in

her hand. She gave her father one brief glance of keen scrutiny, and then, without making a remark of any sort, she arose, placed the pan on the kitchen table, wiped her hands on her apron, took off the apron, and shot out of the door. Dad watched through the window. Etta hurried straight over to the fence, climbed half way up, and vaulted over the rest of it. She ran in at the kitchen door of the Moore house, and through the new Mrs. Adams's kitchen window Dad saw Etta rush up and kiss her new mother most affectionately, after which the two women stood and talked for a moment, Mrs. Adams holding Etta close to her; then they started for the front of the house. Dad saw them pass the sitting-room window, their arms twined about each other's waist. He scratched his head and lit his pipe, then he strolled around to the front of the house and sat on the porch. A few minutes later, Bob Moore, on his favorite dapple gray, came riding back from court at Teetersburg, and Dad hailed him.

"Say, Son," he called, "before you go to the barn, stop in and tell your sister to hurry on back."

"My sister?" inquired Bob in surprise.

"Yes, your sister Etta," replied Dad. "She's over there now, holding a gabfest with my wife. Then you better slick up and come over to the weddin' supper."

"Is that so?" inquired Bob. "So that's what Squire Bumpus meant when he yelled at me, just before I left Teetersburg, whether I was going to call myself Moore or Adams from now on."

"You'll call yourself Moore," Dad informed him.

"Poor Mother!" observed Bob. "I've noticed her memory was failin' every once in a while, but you need n't think I'm gettin' feeble-minded, too;" and with that he rode on.

A quarter of an hour afterwards he came over, smiling.

"My sister Etta is a-going to eat the wedding supper with Ma and me over at my house," he informed Dad. "They send you over a special invite. You can come if you want."

Dad got up and knocked the ashes out of his pipe.

"I'm a-goin' t' have slapjacks for my weddin' supper," he announced, and walked back to the kitchen, where he philosophically set about stirring up the batter.

It was a tedious process, and Dad was a long time in making supper ready. Through the window of the Moore residence he could see the three sitting down to supper before he had his own prepared, and he closed his blind in order not to have that sight staring him in the face; but just as he sat down his kitchen door opened and Bob Moore came in, bearing a tray which he placed upon the table. He lifted a cloth. There were three pieces of nice fried chicken, mashed potatoes, sweet potatoes, gravy, stewed corn, some nice slices of white bread, a little

pat of the golden butter for which the Widow Moore had been justly famous, a little glass of jelly, some preserves on a side dish, and a huge tumbler of fine home-made wine. Bob set the wine off the tray.

"This," he said, "is to drink the health of the bride," and then he went out.

He had no more than landed on the other side of the fence when the tray and all its contents landed in the Moore yard after him.

Etta came home about nine o'clock, escorted by Bob. They both came in grinning. Dad had the new copy of the *Clarion* to solace him, and he kept his back turned to them, until Bob, having discussed the wedding supper with Etta with great gusto, turned to go. Dad permitted himself the weakness to look around as Bob went out, and Bob had been counting on that weakness.

"By Jinks!" he said. "I almost forgot to kiss my sister good-night;" and there, before Dad's very eyes, he gathered Etta up and bestowed on her a kiss of an earnestness seldom bestowed by brothers.

This last bit of audacity was too much for Dad, and he sprang to his feet. A Moore for once ran before an Adams. Bob dashed out of the kitchen door and slammed it after him, and by the time Dad had it open again, Bob was jumping the fence between the two properties.

Etta had braced herself for a storm, but when Dad turned around he was only grinning. She looked at him a minute quizzically, then she echoed his smile. Father and daughter understood each other pretty well, after all. She walked up to him and patted his cheek; she caught hold of his goatee and pulled his face down to kiss him, and then—such are the inexplicable ways of women—she suddenly buried her face on his shoulder, and when he lifted her head there were tears in her eyes. He put his arm around her and patted her shoulder, puzzled, and yet seeking no explanation. He knew better at his age than to try to fathom the mystery as to why women should always cry, not alone over funerals, but over marriages and christenings; not alone over partings, but over reunions; not alone over sorrows, but over joys.

Etta, however, never had more than from ten to fourteen tears to spare at a time, and so she looked up smiling.

"I have always wished I had Jennie Moore for a mother," she said. "I have never had one since I can remember, and after you come around to giving in that she's the boss, we'll be a mighty happy family, I believe."

"The boss!" snorted Dad. "I'm to be the boss, and don't forget it! I was cut out for a boss! I'm a natural born boss!"

"So is Maw," Etta reminded him, and started upstairs. On the third step she paused. "Have you thought about the shivaree party, Dad?" she inquired.

"By Jinks, no!" he admitted. "Not since we come home, that is."

"Well, I don't think Ma has either," Etta added. "Say, Dad, I reckon they won't hardly know where to go, will they?" and with this hint she went to her room.

Dad pondered her observation for some little time before the meaning of it dawned upon him, and then a slight load lifted from him. Etta was loyal, after all. He looked over at the Moore house. The lights were out down-stairs, but they still gleamed from two rooms up-stairs. Presently the light in the Widow's window went out, and in less than a half-hour afterwards the light in Bob's room was extinguished. Dad took prompt and vigorous action. He pulled down all the blinds in the lower part of the house, then he lit every lamp that he could scrape up, putting three of them in the front room, so that brilliant streaks glowed around the edges of the curtains. Out in the yard he could see that a light still gleamed from Etta's room, and he called her.

"Say, Ett," he yelled up after she had opened her door, "do you mind comin' down and help makin' a noise?"

Etta laughed softly. She had been waiting for the idea to "soak in," and she came down at once.

"Get your fiddle, Dad," she invited, and, running to the parlor organ, she played a lively dance tune.

Dad, grinning delightedly, seized his violin, and on the next tune he was ready to join her. Etta startled him by laughing aloud and kicking a chair to make it scrape on the base-board at the edge of the "stripe-wove" rag carpet. That was another hint. Dad, playing his fiddle, laughed uproariously and moved vigorously about the room, stirring the furniture everywhere. The result was but natural. The watching sentinels heard sounds of festivity in the Adams house, and they reported to the gathering clans. For nearly an hour the sounds of gaiety echoed from the Adams house, and then the lights were all put out. The shivaree party waited a full half-hour after that, as Hickoryville etiquette demanded, and then Dad Adams had the satisfaction of hearing his front yard filled with the unearthly din of tin pans and cow-bells, of circular saws and horse-fiddles, of fish-horns and all the other implements of ear torture. Nails were slipped under the weather boarding, and the resined strings wailed into the night, and Dad, mindful of the etiquette of the occasion, slipped around the corner of the house in his stockinged feet and soused the serenaders with a bucket of water. Then, when the men and boys in his yard had beaten their arms sore and shouted their voices hoarse, he graciously appeared on the front porch with the box of cigars which he had purchased in Teetersburg in anticipation of this very visit. He carried out a keg of hard cider and some tin cups and started the boys at work

on them. He shook hands with each of them as they came up, dwelling with secret satisfaction on the fact that at least he and not the new Mrs. Adams had the shivaree. The one thing upon which he had counted with trepidation came to pass, however, in the form of an insistent call for a sight of the bride. Now, the etiquette of this point varied. Sometimes the bride refused to appear, and sometimes she was gracious enough to do so. Hickoryville, however, counted on the Widow Moore, and the demand was soon so urgent that Dad found it very difficult to evolve a reasonable excuse. It had to be made, however.

"Mis' Adams," he shouted above the din, "ain't feelin' very well to-night. She's got a terrible headache!"

"It ain't so, and you know it, Dad Adams!" came an unexpected voice, and every head turned in the direction of the Moore residence. A moment later a light flared up in the second-story front bed-room, and the new Mrs. Adams, still fully dressed, appeared in the window.

"Come right on over, boys," she called. "I've got some cakes and wine down-stairs all set out for you. You can come over on the porch with the boys, if you want to, Dad."

There were only two courses open to the late Widow Moore's new husband. The backs of the shivaree party were toward him, as they filed out of his gate, wondering, but welcoming the diversion. Dad, accepting defeat with the philosophy of a great general, joined the shivaree party on the front porch of Mrs. Jennie Adams. The wine she gave them was home-made and three years old, and it went down with a peculiar and extremely agreeable tang after the hard cider. She treated Dad Adams exactly like the rest of the throng. She filled his glass as often as he would let her, and forced cakes upon him, and when the honors had been done to the extreme limits of hospitality, she closed her front door on Dad with the others.

The combination of hard cider and wine made twenty headaches in Hickoryville next day, but Dad's was not one of them. His head had never ached in his life, but the twenty-sixth pumpkin which he found on his front porch that morning was decorated in a manner which was past endurance. The crude caricature was burned deeper than on the previous pumpkin, and a dunce cap surmounted the head!

CHAPTER XIII.

A MATTER OF MARRIED RIGHTS

BOB MOORE, going out to the barn that morning, was surprised to hear some one making a clatter inside it. He found Dad Adams pulling the corn-sheller toward the door.

"Mornin', Dad," observed Bob. "What you doin'?"

He saw perfectly well what Dad was about, but such neighborly

borrowings were not unusual in Hickoryville, where property lines are not so strictly drawn as in more thickly settled communities, and it was nothing strange for one reputable citizen to borrow an implement first and ask permission afterwards, if the family did not happen to be up or at home when he wanted it. Dad's reply, however, put the transaction upon an entirely different plane.

"I'm takin' my corn-sheller over to my other barn," he answered. "The old one ain't workin' very well."

"Your corn-sheller?" exploded Bob, and then the meaning of it all dawned upon him. "Say, Dad Adams, you let that corn-sheller stay right where it is! If you want to use it, you can bring our corn over here!"

"Look here, Sonny," advised Dad, "when your father wants your advice, he'll ask for it. So far as orders go, I never took any from a young 'un of mine yet, and I don't intend to begin now!"

He gave the corn-sheller a yank. Bob grabbed for it, but another yank brought it out of the doorway and out of Bob's reach at the same time, whereupon Bob stumbled and landed on his hands and knees, and by the time he could get up Dad had the corn-sheller outside and was working it toward the fence, from which he had already removed a panel. Bob was more cautious this time in his rush, and seized upon the machine. Etta was already watching the operation from the Adams kitchen door, and just at that moment the new Mrs. Adams came out. Dad caught sight of his wife, and the same desire to shine in the eyes of a lady love that has made wars, aroused heroes to conquer nations, and changed the geography of the world, inspired him to give Bob Moore the surprise of his life. He suddenly let go of the corn-sheller, and before Bob knew what was happening Dad had, with great agility, sprung over to him, slipped his strong left arm around Bob's chest, just under the arm-pit, and yanked him across to the chopping-block, where Dad sat down and, with Bob utterly helpless across his knees, delivered to his step-son a spanking of great vigor!

It was not in human nature to view this spectacle without laughter, and the voices of Mrs. Jennie Adams and Miss Etta Adams were raised in gleeful unison; but the last straw was the shrill cackle from over on Granny Hooker's front porch! Bob gave a mighty heave, and Dad, realizing that he could no longer hold this lusty youth in chancery, suddenly sprang up and dashed away, just two lengths ahead of Bob, in whose eye glowed a fury which nothing short of gore was likely to appease. Shelter was far distant, except for the very bone of contention—the corn-sheller—and to the other side of this Dad rushed, laughing with a succession of haw-haws which were in themselves enough to drive the maddened Bob to the very last bearable verge of frenzy. Around and around the corn-sheller they raced, facing each

other, and with every circle Bob's blind desire for revenge grew more intense; but it was an impossible chase. Most unequally matched racers could have kept at even distances around a small object like this, and Bob made the one desperate attempt that could possibly end in success. He made a sudden lunge across the corn-sheller itself, and managed to grip Dad by the suspender. Dad naturally jerked back, and Bob, his weight against the corn-sheller, sprawled over it while Dad pulled them both down.

When one lands with stunning force upon the ground, with only the top of one's nose to soften the concussion, the result is agonizing enough to drive out all other ideas, and when Bob arose he was blinded with pain, and tractable enough for his mother to be able to lead him to the house, where he might, over a basin of warm water, stanch his bleeding nose; and by the time this was done Dad had moved the corn-sheller over into his own barn. Bob was for going after it as soon as he had recovered his breath, and incidentally he was for thrashing his step-father, but his mother used all her powers of command and persuasion upon him to such good effect that, after a long and earnest conversation, they wended their way to Chip Rawson's store; and Bob, beneath his swollen nose, wore a most cheerful grin.

Never was such a bill of goods bought in Chip Rawson's store. The erstwhile Widow Moore had made a careful computation of everything that she actually needed in the line of wearing apparel, and to this she added everything she would like to have, including Chip's best black silk dress pattern; besides, there were new curtains for her windows, new table-cloths, new bed-spreads, new everything. For Bob there were overalls and jumpers, the best sweater in the store—the one Chip Rawson had put in stock with great trepidation—a pair of working boots and a pair of Sunday shoes, socks and underclothing, a new hat, shirts and collars and ties, gloves and even a silk muffler.

Before they had well begun their shopping, Mrs. Hicks-with-the-wart-on-her-nose had come in for six eggs' worth of tea, and, there being no one but Chip to serve her, she was naturally compelled to wait until this magnificent line of purchases had been made. As article after article, each of the best, was added to the towering pile upon the counter, Mrs. Hicks stood more and more aghast, until finally mere tea became a trifle to be no longer considered. She bustled out upon the street with the interests of the entire community at heart. She hurried back in just a few minutes, this time prepared to stay until she got the tea, without fretting over the delay. It was even her glorious privilege, upon edging closer to the magnificent spendthrift, and volunteering an observation anent quality, to be cheerfully welcomed by the cordial purchaser and asked for her advice. Mrs. Purvis waddled in while the wonderful silk was being selected from among Chip's six

patterns. She wanted a box of matches, but she, too, was quite content to wait. Outwardly Mrs. Purvis was most enthusiastic about the silk and most cheerful in assisting Mrs. Hicks and the real customer to select it, but inwardly she was eaten of hideous jealousy, for this was the identical dress pattern she had hoped to purchase through loosening Jake's purse-strings by the manipulation of three white hairs from a black cat's tail; and even as she congratulated the proud possessor of it, she gritted her teeth in inward rage at the failure of Granny Hooker.

Chip was surprised to see Mrs. Beezy come bustling in before the silk had been fully decided upon. Business was undoubtedly picking up. If he only had a wife, now, to help him tend store on occasions like this, how handy it would be! Etta Adams, for instance, would make a splendid clerk. He had long since decided upon that. Mrs. Beezy was in great perplexity. She announced, with much circumspection, that she had actually forgotten what she came in for, but by and by it did not seem to worry her much, especially since she was cordially called into counsel by Mrs. Purvis and Mrs. Hicks-with-the-wart-on-her-nose about some percale for Mrs. Adams.

Mrs. Tinker and Mrs. Damm came in together. Mrs. Jones and Sissy Williams followed. Never before, except sometimes on busy Saturdays, had there been so many customers in that store at once. The place buzzed and glowed with the fever of excitement as the prodigal spendthrift bought this and that and the other dainty comfort and adornment, upon most of which the entire feminine population of Hickoryville had often cast longing eyes in vain, and when all the bundles had been wrapped up, and Bob Moore and his mother had started out of the door, every other customer, having completely forgotten her own individual errand, went out upon the street to watch those two richly laden figures on their homeward way. The highly agitated procession met Granny Hooker hobbling breathlessly toward the store. She had received the news in plenty of time, but the rheumatism she had gained in watching for Dad Adams's pumpkins was distressing her unusually to-day, and it was with positive self-poison that she found herself too late. The procession dared go no further, in common decency, than Mrs. Purvis's gate, where they paused to discuss matters and compare notes, while Jennie Adams and her son, proud in the possession of many hitherto self-denied luxuries, passed the Adams gate and turned in at the Moore residence.

Dad Adams, calmly engaged in washing Bob Moore's new buggy with the evident intention of using it, looked up with frowning wonder as he saw all those neatly wrapped parcels being brought home, but as the burden-bearers said nothing to him, he said nothing to them, and let them pass on into the Moore house, whence Bob, shorn of his bundles, but wearing the new working boots and the gloves, presently came

strolling out. The sight of Bob's swollen nose gave Dad's puzzled thought a new fillip, and, being safely on the far side of the buggy, he smiled with vast enjoyment.

"Hello, Bob!" he ventured. "I'm glad you're back. I want you to come over to the barn and turn my corn-sheller for me."

"Sure, Father," acquiesced Bob. "Here's something Mrs. Adams told me to give you."

Across the buggy he handed Dad a folded slip of paper. Slowly Dad opened it. Slowly he read the meaningless words and figures, and then a great white light broke upon him! The folded slip of paper was the bill made out to Dad Adams, by the pleased Chip Rawson, for all that magnificent bill of goods which Mrs. Dad Adams had just purchased! Dad turned red, and Dad turned pale. Three times he opened his mouth to speak, but the matter was one far beyond words. Suddenly he hurled the wheel-wrench to the ground with such force that it stuck in the earth half its length, and then he strode past the grinning Bob and up to the side door of the house, where, after turning the knob and finding the door locked, he delivered himself of a terrific knocking.

The new Mrs. Adams stuck her head out of the window just above him.

"What is it, Dad?" she asked sweetly.

He looked up at her, and for the first time in his life he stammered. He had entertained some idea of fierce denunciation, repudiation, and a few other vigorous "ations" which might relieve his ebullient feelings, but the spectacle of his wife smiling cheerfully down upon him once more choked the flow of words, and his Adams apple merely jerked up and down convulsively.

"I'm so glad you called, Dad," she continued pleasantly, taking smiling advantage of his temporary defenselessness. "I wish when you go home you'd ask Etta to come over. I've bought a lot of nice new things, and I want us to start in on our winter sewing right away for her and me."

Dad at last found his voice.

"Say," he ejaculated, "do you think I'm a dum fool? I ain't a-goin' t' pay for them goods, and I ain't, and I ain't, and that settles it!"

"Oh, yes, you will, Paw," she admonished him. "If you don't, Chip Rawson'll sue you, and you'll have to pay it anyhow. I told Chip I'd stand all expenses for the suit. There's a law in this land compellin' a husband to support his wife and family accordin' to his means. Bob," she called, "run over to our other house and tell your sister I want to see her, and then go to our other barn with your Paw and turn our other corn-sheller for him."

She closed the window gently. Dad gulped. He was not one who could accept defeat gracefully, but he was one who knew when he was beaten, and he saw clearly that this was one of the occasions. Without further parley, he strode out of the Moore gate and up the street toward Chip Rawson's store. Half way there, he changed his mind and came back again. He finished washing Bob's buggy, and, without protest from that young man, hitched up and drove off by himself in the direction of Teetersburg. The next issue of the *Clarion*, which appeared two days later, contained this formal announcement:

Thomas Jefferson Adams will not be responsible for any debts contracted by his wife, Jennie Adams, or her son and his step-son, Bob Moore.

CHAPTER XIV.

AN ACTUAL EYE-WITNESS

LONG JOHN FLANDERS did not so much mind passing the Baptist graveyard in the darkness of early morning. Somehow or other, it seemed a different sort of darkness from that of the fore part of the night, and, moreover, it was perfectly well known that the uneasy dead returned to their graves as soon as the roosters began to crow. Consequently, while one might not exactly care to stroll around among the white headstones after rooster-crow, on account of the eerie midnight associations, still there was not a mite of danger to be apprehended, not even that vague, awful terror of seeing something; so when, as now, he was compelled to drive over to Teetersburg with a load of wheat, he took a very early start. It was still pitch dark when he passed the burying-ground, and, though there was nothing to fear, he kept his head turned steadfastly away from that uncanny place, only comforted and saved from panic even then by the fact that the roosters were at that very moment crowing their lusty defiance at one another throughout the entire valley.

Dawn was just breaking when he lumbered into Hickoryville, and every house was dark and still, but as he passed Dad Adams's place, in the dim, misty light he distinctly saw a thing which brought his heart popping into his throat. A pumpkin came floating unmistakably through the very air, and landed noiselessly upon Dad's front porch! It seemed to have sailed in from the far end of the porch, and, moreover, Long John was confident that a sort of nebulous mist surrounded it and bore it along. He did not wait to see whether this mist took definite shape, or rose and flitted away when it had let down its burden; he felt only a sudden imperative need to hurry!

It was a remarkable thing about Long John's power of vision that the further away from Dad Adams's house he drew, the more positive

he was of what he had seen, and by the time he had reached the far end of the town, where Jacob Schnit's house and tailor shop, and Hen Damm's blacksmith shop and calamus swamp, were the last vestiges of human habitation until Cap Peek's hillside farm-house came into view, he had the details firmly in his mind's eye, and was able to tell Jacob Schnit about them. Jacob was up, attending to his bees, the very hives into which Mrs. Schnit, with profound gravity, always whispered the news of any death in the neighborhood as soon as she heard it, so as to ward away dire misfortune.

"Whoa!" said Long John to his horses, and Jacob came hurrying out to the gate.

He already had on his little brown tailor's apron, and there was a popular tradition in Hickoryville that "The Dutchman" slept in it, since no mortal man had ever seen him without it.

"Fine mornink," said Jacob.

"Fine for some folks," admitted Long John, "but not for Dad Adams, I'm thinkin'."

"Huh!" inquired Jacob. "Iss he got such another devil pumpkin this mornink?"

"Shoo!" said Long John. "Honest, Jacob, my breath's a-flutterin' yet from what I just seen!"

"*Her-r-r Je!*" exclaimed Jacob. "You don't say it!"

"Sure as you're born!" declared Long John. "I'd be mighty glad, if I was you, that you live clear at the other end of town from Dad Adams—and from Granny Hooker. *And—from—Granny—Hooker!* Mark my words, if Dad Adams had saw what I saw, and I'd be him, a constable 'ud be after Granny Hooker as quick as I could get him there!"

"But what was it already?" demanded Jacob, his curiosity aroused to fever pitch.

This was precisely the state of expectancy for which Long John had been waiting.

"What was it?" repeated Long John. "Why, the pumpkin! It come sailin' right through the air with kind of a greenish glow around it and a dark figure a-carryin' it, and while I could n't say it was her, mind you, it looked to me for all the world as if it might 'a' been Granny Hooker. I would n't put it a-past her, and, leastwise, there ain't nobody else in Hickoryville can ride through the air."

"Did she have such a broom?" asked Jacob breathlessly.

"Reely now, I could n't swear," replied Long John, with an air of weighing the matter with judicial impartiality. "I would n't want t' say anything 't I was n't sure of. I'd 'a' felt it my duty to stop and tell Dad Adams what I seen, except I don't feel as if I had a right to wake him up so early in the mornin'; and, besides, I would n't set

foot on that porch or inside his yard before broad daylight for any money."

"Sure not," agreed Jacob. "But I tell him myself yet."

"All right," assented Long John, after a reluctant pause in which he had reflected that the cat was out of the bag anyhow, and that there would be no chance to keep the news until evening for his own breaking.

Leaving Jacob standing at the gate, transfixed with awe, he drove on, and by the time he had reached Cap Peek's place, that remarkable faculty of his eyesight had increased. He remembered now that the floating figure bore a remarkably strong resemblance to Granny Hooker, and by this time his eyes were almost sure of the broom. By the time he had reached Teetersburg, the tale was complete and gaudy, and it spread like wildfire, while Long John's self-esteem arose with every moment, and new details were added with every telling. He was the most sought after man in the county, and he enjoyed himself as never before. There were red and green flaming lights now; there were flashes of lightning and rolling smoke; there was a strong smell of sulphur attending the phenomenon; there were rumblings of thunder and cracklings of electricity; his own hair had stood straight up, and the electrical disturbance was of such intensity that sparks radiated from him, and even from the horses, in every direction; a flaming bolt of some sort had whizzed right past his cheek and almost burned it. By the time he started home, that cheek actually was tender to the touch.

When he got back to Hickoryville he found an entirely different tale. Jacob Schnit had taken the start which Long John had given him, and had done his best with it, and the two diverging stories had lost their semblance to each other entirely except for the mere central fact of the aeronautic pumpkin, which really was a fact. The arrival of Long John, however, served to give coherence and direction to the sensation, if not to the tale, and it was but the matter of half an hour to weld the two stories into one glorious and harmonious whole.

Dad Adams, though, had immediately washed his hands of the whole affair. Jacob Schnit, reinforced by Hen Damm, had hurried right down at daybreak and waited for Dad to come out and get his pumpkin, and Dad was furious when the tale was told him.

"Long John Flanders always was touched in the head," he blurted. "Somebody had ort to scare him so stiff that his jaw would n't thaw out again till next Fourth of July. He's a plumb natural born idiot! Why, Gran' Hooker was sick a-bed three days, and the pumpkins kept a-comin' every mornin' just the same!"

"Sure was she sick a-bed!" declared Jacob. "And not any wonder when her ghost was out ridink mit broomsticks and catching rheumatisms every night."

"Why, she could be layin' in her bed right before a body's eyes and her ha'n't could be out skitin' around on a broom, workin' all sorts of devilment to everybody in Hickoryville," supplemented Hen Damm. "You'd ort to put her away. Mealy Jones has to go over to Teetersburg this very morning. Shall Mealy send the squire over?"

"No!" snapped Dad; and that made it Hickoryville's business!

If the man who most needed protection would not take single-handed action in the matter, all the other jeopardized inhabitants must combine for defense. This had become the subject of great popular determination by nightfall, and Jacob Schnit was the man of the hour who proved equal to the occasion. At the head of a bold but palpitating delegation, he knocked at Granny Hooker's door. The knock was so vigorous and so startling that Granny, in hastening to answer it, forgot to take off the cabalistic cap which she was then wearing for the manufacture of a new love-potion for Mrs. Purvis. Mrs. Purvis still wanted the new dress, and, having paid fifty cents and a chicken to Granny for a charm which refused to work, was insistent upon her rights. It was the first time that Granny's magic cap had been seen in public in Hickoryville, and the weird and unholy thing threw Jacob Schnit into instant confusion, while the entire balance of the delegation shrank back perceptibly.

"Goodness gracious me!" ejaculated Granny Hooker. "What's the matter?"

"Mis' Hooker," said Jacob Schnit quite formally, shoving his right hand in between his coat-buttons, "we haff made it out that you should move over to Teetersburg or anywhere else what you want to go, and the citizens will donate the wagons what to do it with."

"Move!" exclaimed Granny Hooker. "Move! This is my house, ain't it? That's my yard you're standin' in, ain't it? You get out o' my yard, you people. Get right out or I'll will a wish on you! Jake Schnit, you're plumb crazy! Whatever give you the fool notion that I'd move or that you wanted me to move?"

"For such a peace and safety of Hickoryville," said Jacob solemnly. "When a body goes it riding on brooms through the air, putting such pumpkins on other people's front porches, it's time already that a body moved before somethink worse is dit."

"Hum!" mused Granny Hooker.

It was not within her craving for power and influence to deny this thing with which she had been charged. To be given credit for the accomplishment of a broom-riding feat which she had tried for years without success, was almost too good to be true. Her answer was not at all the one Jacob Schnit and the delegation behind him had expected. They had looked for a plea for mercy, coupled with a promise to sin no more. Instead of that she said:

"Jake Schnit, there's a spell on you from this minute! To-night you're a-goin' t' have the toothache, then you're a-goin' t' have the rheumatism! While your teeth's a-achin' in your head, your toes 'll ache with the rheumatism; then your ankles 'll ache with it, then your knees, then your hips, then your back, then your shoulders and elbows and wrists and fingers, until every blessed bone in your body aches! That's what's goin' t' happen to you, Jake Schnit! Now, the rest of you get away from my house!"

"*Ach Gott!*" wailed a pathetic voice from the outermost fringe of the shrinking crowd, and Jacob Schnit turned perfectly pallid.

CHAPTER XV.

GRANNY HOOKER COMES INTO HER OWN

To say that Hickoryville was anxious about the welfare of Jacob Schnit would be to put it mildly. Every few minutes some one of the neighbors ran over to see if the spell had begun working yet, and Jake himself sat dolefully in the front room, awaiting with miserable certainty the moment when the curse should take effect. Sometimes he thought it was already starting, and then for a few minutes would come the glorious feeling that he had been mistaken. Mrs. Hicks-with-the-wart-on-her-nose, and Mrs. Hen Damm from across the road, were the neighbors who were fortunate enough to be there when the real affliction hit him. He had been sitting in quiet but nervous preparation for some fifteen minutes thinking about his teeth, when all at once his hand came up to his face with a slap, his mouth flew open, his eyes screwed up, and he emitted a loudly pathetic "Ouch!"

"It iss gott me!" he gasped. "In the teeth it iss got me, and already also I seem to feel such a sort of a pain in my left foot."

Mrs. Schnit instantly began pressing out a red flannel rag with an iron which had been made hot in advance for the purpose, and in a moment more it was applied to Jacob's jaw. He shook his head and rolled his eyes.

"I don't reckon that 'll do much good," said Mrs. Damm in doleful sympathy with the conviction expressed in that head-shake. "Hot flannel may be good for common ordinary toothache, but not a witch toothache."

Mrs. Hicks-with-the-wart-on-her-nose waited for no more. The entire population of Hickoryville must be treated to the delightfully startling news, and Granny Hooker's stock went up by leaps and bounds. There was no thought now of driving her forth. Hickoryville was proud of Granny, and immediately strove to propitiate her. Martha Purvis dropped down to assure the old woman that she need not worry

about that love philtre—" 'cause she reckoned that Jake was so crabbed and mean and onery that no charm would work on him."

"Yes, it will," declared Granny Hooker, who was already beginning to take full advantage of the tremendous reputation she had gained. "You go right home and tell Jake Purvis that I said he was to start in dotin' on you within one hour, an' that I said he should get you a new dress with all the trimmin's."

Jake Purvis, though he scouted the idea that Granny Hooker could do him any damage, promised his wife the dress, and, after much thought on the subject, resolved to throw himself into a fever of admiration such as had not blessed rotund Mrs. Purvis since she had passed the one hundred-and-eighty-pound mark.

Chip Rawson sent Granny down a half-dozen oranges. Mrs. Beezy ran over with a generous piece of her latest cake, upon which she was anxious Granny should pronounce expert opinion. Mrs. Squire Bumpus, from Teetersburg, who happened to be visiting her second cousin, Mealy Jones's wife, dropped in to get a running of the cards, and to cross Granny's hand generously with the silver needed to make the reading true.

In the meantime the pains of little Jacob Schnit grew worse and worse. Following the course laid down by Granny Hooker, the rheumatism started in his feet and spread throughout his entire body, until every joint was pervaded by an agony which no hot applications would relieve. He had gone to bed now, where he groaned and writhed until, at last, giving up, he sent Mrs. Schnit down to Granny to intercede for him. Intercession was of no avail. Granny, thoroughly intrenched now and risen to a height of power of which she had long dreamed but had never approached, stood upon her dignity. It would be necessary for Jacob Schnit to come himself, to bring a white pullet and a black pullet, a breadth of flannel and a breadth of cloth, and to drink of a certain black and nauseous mixture which she was even then brewing with the certain knowledge that he would come—and Jacob came!

Dressing himself, he crawled painfully and groaningly down to Granny Hooker's house as late as ten o'clock, and there were many who went with him. They were all barred out, however, while Granny put the white pullet to the north of her little centre table in the kitchen, the black pullet to the south, the breadth of flannel to the east, and the breadth of cloth to the west. She muttered and made passes and burned herbs, and then she gave Jacob Schnit to drink of a brew the taste of which he was certain to remember to his dying day; but he came forth feeling much better and certain to be cured entirely within the hour. When he returned home, however, Mrs. Schnit met him at the door with tears in her eyes. The old canary had died, and while this had not been foretold by Granny Hooker, it was laid to her door,

and she did not deny it. That was the crowning feat which raised Granny to the pinnacle of her life's ambition.

When Dad Adams heard of it all, and hear he did, for not less than seven people made separate and especial errands to tell him about it, he was more angry than ever. They were a pack of blithering fools, the whole lot of them. Nevertheless, the incident aroused him to a fresh determination to solve the great pumpkin mystery. Once more he took up an all-night vigil upon the porch, resolved this time that there should be no half-dozing to give an interloper a chance. Nor did he doze, but nevertheless, at about half past four, a pumpkin hit him a pretty good clip on the side of the head, and, falling then to the porch, broke in a dozen pieces. This time he was certain that no figure had suddenly disappeared from his sight, and for the first time in his life Dad had a chilly feeling in the region of his heart. He stepped out to the gate and looked long and earnestly at the Moore residence. As he looked, a light flared up in Mrs. Jennie Adams's window, and he heard her laugh heartily inside the drawn blinds. Dad could not figure out how the trick was being done, but now there came to him almost a certainty that his wife was somehow or other at the bottom of it all.

Like every other conjecture Dad Adams had formed about the source of the pumpkins, however, this one proved futile, for on that very day Mrs. Jennie Adams was sent for to go over to Hoadleyburg to the funeral of Aunt Mehitabel Hoadley, and Bob, of course, went with her. They were gone three days, but the pumpkins still appeared with unfailing regularity, and Dad, having for a brief space of time resolved to pay no attention to the pumpkin persecution, now once more lashed himself into a fever heat over it, principally because the whole town and the surrounding country were pumpkin-mad and the thing was becoming unbearable. They drove over in wagons and buggies, whole families of them, from Teetersburg and Weevil Bottoms and Piney Ridge and Utica, and even as far off as Cushings Mills and Six Corners! All of them were consumed with a burning desire to look at the porch where pumpkins were materialized out of thin air, and one and all of them paid tribute to Granny Hooker. Her house was the Mecca for all Pumpkin Hollow and beyond, and prosperity showered its rich blessings upon her day after day. Chickens and home-made sausages, hams and sides of bacon, crocks of lard and rolls of sweet golden butter, to say nothing of real money, made life young once more to Granny, aside from the mere pride of having become the leading personage within a radius of many miles. Every fresh influx of wondering visitors gave Dad a new pang, until he became fairly rabid about it, the more so as, in spite of himself, a slight touch of superstition was creeping in upon his secret consciousness, and the knowl-

edge of it made him furious with himself, his fury taking the form of violent dislike for anybody affected similarly, or in any degree.

Dad took now to joining the evening circle at the store, which he had previously avoided. Naturally, the only topic of conversation was of ghosts and witches and such like shivery things, which, by an irresistible fascination, chained the attention of every man in the group, their fears increasing by what they fed on. Especially was this true of Long John Flanders, and toward him for this reason Dad felt the greatest contempt. The idea of giving Long John such a scare that he would stay at home formed slowly in Dad's mind, but, like other ideas which are slow in coming, this one was fixed, once it had arrived. It was a hint, dropped in the presence of Lafe Hardy, that he had this thing in mind, which started the practical jokers to work. There were, within the confines of Hickoryville, two or three wild enough spirits that they would have tried issues with the devil himself if he had appeared to them, and of these Lafe was still the ringleader. Trembling little Jacob Schnit, whose soul had quaked morning, noon, and night since Granny Hooker had put the spell upon him, was the logical victim. Lafe Hardy and Bud Teasewater, the latter of whom was boarding at Sam Tinker's, and Sam Tinker himself, got their heads together and, out of pure devilment, furnished a brand new sensation.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE HAUNTED CANARY

It all started with the funeral which Jacob Schnit gave his pet canary out in the back yard, and which Lafe Hardy happened to see. Lafe, having some amateur skill in stuffing animals, dug up the bird that night, and within a couple of days he had it neatly stuffed. On the following morning Lafe and Bud and Sam were on hand, as soon as Jacob had opened his shop, to discuss the matter of a new town pump, and while Jacob was setting his shop to rights, Lafe quietly slipped the canary in its old-time, empty cage. When Jacob finally saw the bird he rubbed his eyes and looked again.

"Ach," he said, "it is a new bird what Lena has got. Yes, but it should look just like my Pfeiffer?"

Lafe Hardy followed Jacob's troubled gaze to the cage, and turned back to him in solemn wonder.

"Where?" he asked.

"Don't you seen it?" Jacob asked excitedly. "The bird in the cage?"

Lafe pityingly shook his head.

"No, I don't see any bird," he said. "Do you, Sam?"

"Bird?" repeated Sam Tinker, looking hard at the cage. "Bird?"

"Vat iss?" shrieked Jacob. "Don't you seen it, the bird in the cage? Don't you seen it, Bud?"

Bud Teasewater arose solemnly from the bench and walked over to the cage. He stood on tiptoe so that he could see into the bottom of it, then he shook his head.

"No bird there, Jake," he said.

"Look a-here, old man," admonished Lafe Hardy, "you're worrying too much. You've been thinking so much about that bird that you think you see it there. Now, I tell you what you do. You look steady out of the window at the beehives for a few minutes, then look at the cage."

Jacob did as he was directed. He looked solemnly and earnestly out of the window at the beehives for a solid two minutes, in which the room was in awe-inspiring silence.

"Now look," directed Lafe.

Jacob looked up at the cage, and his face turned white.

"I see it yet," he said. "Why, *donnervetter!* Don't anybody seen that bird?"

The trio shook their heads in sorrow.

"Too bad," said Bud; "too bad. Your eyes must be giving out on you. You work too much at night. Look here, I'll fix it for you;" and, taking a strip of black cloth, he bound it around Jacob's head, while Lafe quietly abstracted the bird from the cage and slipped it in his pocket.

When the bandage was removed from Jacob's eyes he looked up at the cage hesitatingly. Then a smile broke over his countenance.

"It iss gone," he said joyously. "Ain't that a funny?"

"I would n't exactly call it funny," replied Lafe soberly. "There's too many things going on in Hickoryville that don't look right."

"Yes," observed Sam, as he rose to go; "I hope they have n't begun on you like they did on Dad Adams."

The next day when they came in, Bob Moore, who had returned from Hoadleyburg, came with them. The thing was too good to keep, and Bob was a kindred spirit.

"We come in t' see you about that pump again," said Lafe. "Why, where's your bird-cage?"

"It's gone," said Fritz, with a troubled air. "I did n't like to seen it around. It makes me too much think of Pfeiffer, so Lena has got it up in the attic."

"In the attic!" asked Bud. "Now, ain't that funny? 'Course there's nothing in it, but just as we came in I thought I heard a chirping up in your attic."

"No, it was n't," Jacob vehemently denied.

"Huh! It is funny," declared Bob Moore, listening critically. "Just listen a minute, and you'd think sure there was a chirping up in the attic."

Everybody listened. Silence dense and profound fell upon the assemblage. Jacob slowly arose. His eyes widened and his jaw dropped as, his ear turned critically toward the attic and aided by his imaginative fear, he heard clearly and unmistakably the sound of Pfeiffer's voice up under the rafters. He strode to the door opening back into the living-rooms of his house and threw it open.

"Lena!" he screamed. "You should take that bird-cage out by the woodshed!"

That moment of turning his back was enough for Lafe Hardy's purpose. The bird was placed on the corner of the clock shelf, and the absorbing subject of the town pump was resumed. It was not, however, until Jacob had heard the light feet of Mrs. Schnit patter up into the attic and down again and out into the back yard, that his face lost its strained expression, and he was able to take up the serious municipal problem with his visitors. It was while in the midst of a weighty argument that Jacob's eye happened to rest upon the bird. Quickly he turned away from it and looked long and earnestly out of the window, while three questions were asked him to which he made no reply. From the outdoors he looked up again at the clock shelf, at which he pointed a long, lean finger.

"Now, all three of you look at where I point it out," he exclaimed. "Now what do you see?"

"Eight o'clock," said Bob Moore promptly.

"But the bird?" persisted Jacob. "Don't you seen it? Ain't it not there? Was n't that not Pfeiffer? I say, don't you seen it?"

Four heads shook solemnly in answer. With a sigh, Jacob picked up a strip of black cloth and bound it around his eyes, while the rehabilitated Pfeiffer disappeared into Lafe's pocket.

"Iss it gone yet?" asked Jacob, after a patient wait of a couple of minutes.

"I'll tell you, Jake," said Sam Tinker, "if you actually thought you saw Pfeiffer again, it's time you're a-doing something. There's one way you can get rid of that bird. You must dig it up after dark, and bury it again under a haw-tree at midnight, all by yourself."

"That's the only way," Bud Teasewater agreed. "There's a haw-tree out in the woods across from the Baptist graveyard."

Jake slowly took off his bandage, still holding it, however, to slap back over his eyes in case Pfeiffer should still confront him. Much relieved that the bird was temporarily gone, Jacob surveyed his auditors, one at a time, in trepidation.

"Are you sure about it that haw-tree?" he asked.

"Certainly," replied Sam Tinker. "You ask Granny Hooker if it is n't so."

Jacob shuddered. He had had enough of Granny Hooker.

"Ain't it a nearer haw-tree?" Jacob wanted to know.

"That's the only one in miles of the kind that's just right," asserted Lafe Hardy; "but I'll tell you what we'll do, Jacob. We'll all go with you to-night, and we'll stop just in sight of the tree. I reckon it won't hurt if we come that close and let you go on and bury Pfeiffer."

The thanks of Jacob was profuse.

"I do it to-night," he decided with sudden courage.

There were not less than ten in the party which accompanied Jacob to the haw-tree that night. To the original four had been added Fatty Hicks and Mealy Jones, Hen Damm and Jake Purvis, Long John Flanders and Dad Adams. Dad, earlier in the day, had stoutly refused to go on any such foolishness as this. Anyhow, he was busy. He was penning up his front porch, nailing solid planks around its three sides, up to six feet in height, and over the door and window, and from there to up under the porch-eaves he stretched a stout wire mesh through which nothing larger than a walnut could be forced. For once and all, he had decided to get rid of the pumpkin nuisance. He had finished this job and was surveying it in admiration when Long John Flanders, his little bundle under his arm, came into town for the express purpose of going to the bird funeral, and then Dad, with a sudden slap of the thigh, announced his determination to go along. He was chuckling when he went back into the kitchen.

"Say, Ett," he wanted to know, "have you got an old sheet and an old pillow-case that I can cut a couple of holes in?" and then he carefully explained to her the trick he had long had in contemplation for the special benefit of Long John Flanders.

Etta was singularly listless to-night, but she smiled with an appreciation that she could not help, though it was only a wan smile.

"All right, Father," she assented wearily, and went up-stairs to get them for him.

For a long time after he had left the house Etta sat musing dejectedly; but an Adams head could not droop long, and, raising her own to its usual strong poise, she went over to the Moore residence to chat a while with the erstwhile Widow.

"Where's Bob?" was her first question.

"He's gone out with the boys to help fool that poor little Jacob Schnit, and it's plumb wicked."

"Father's gone along too," said Etta. "I wish they'd all get scared worse than Jacob."

"Especially Dad Adams," snapped Etta's new step-mother.

CHAPTER XVII.

CHIP RAWSON'S AFFECTIONS CHANGE

CHIP RAWSON, alone of all the younger element in Hickoryville, was not interested in the great joke to be played on Jacob Schnit, for Chip had more weighty matters upon his mind. Mrs. Rawson was advancing in years, and was distinctly less able to keep up her house-keeping in the immaculate manner which the fastidious nature of Chip required. The orthodox rule of washing on Monday, ironing on Tuesday, mending on Wednesday, sweeping and dusting on Thursday, scrubbing on Friday, and baking on Saturday, had begun to lose its charm for her, and Chip felt that a new and more vigorous worker should be introduced into his household. Moreover, there was the store to be considered.

As early as eight o'clock upon this particular night the clans began to gather on his porch, so a-quiver with excitement that the very air seemed surcharged with it, and Long John Flanders was among them, the most excited of the lot, his little paper-wrapped bundle held tightly under his arm; but none of their tenseness communicated itself to Chip. He turned away even from the absorbing topic of the boarding up of Dad's porch, and went inside the lonely store to think.

Lying upon the counter lay two or three bolts of calico, and Chip mechanically started to put them away. As his hand fell upon one particular bolt, a dead black fabric speckled plentifully with small, bright red flowers, he paused. This was the goods which Granny Hooker had especially admired. He opened it out, and laid his elbows upon it thoughtfully. Granny Hooker! His faith in her had been rudely shaken that time she had provided the useless love-potion to put in Etta Adams's tea at the time of the Union Sociable, but since she had achieved fame Chip was ready to suspend his judgment; and why not? Leaving aside the fact that she was popularly credited with wafting magic pumpkins onto Dad Adams's porch, there was the fearful and undisputed spell she had laid upon Jacob Schnit, and since then it was well known that she had charmed away aches and pains and miseries of every description. There were now walking about the streets of Hickoryville alone a score of living witnesses to the power of Granny Hooker in driving out the seven devils of bodily ills, besides a host composed of all the rest of the population ready to pay enthusiastic tribute to her powers of prophesy and sorcery. Slowly Chip slid his two hands back and forth between the breadths of the calico until he had counted off ten yards. Before he took his scissors from his pocket he paused again; then, with sudden determination, he made a little cut through the selvage and tore the calico the rest of the way across

with a decisive r-r-r-rip. He folded it up and tied it in a neat package; then he went to the door and studied the assembled populace.

"Fatty, come in and tend store a little spell."

Fatty Hicks turned reluctantly from the absorbing conversation. Ordinarily, he compensated himself for such temporary clerkships by eating his fill of butter cracker sandwiches, spread with a layer of yellow sugar between them, but now the occasion was too absorbing.

"Don't be gone long," he warned as he took the official chair just inside the door.

"Be back in two shakes of a dead lamb's tail," Chip assured him, and started for Granny Hooker's.

That clerkship was another thing which bothered him. His mother was no longer safe to be trusted in the store, since she was more bent on pleasing herself than her customers, and inclined to quarrel on the slightest provocation. Etta Adams now—— Chip hurried on. Granny Hooker was a long time coming to her kitchen door, and she opened it only a little way.

"Good-evenin', Mis' Hooker," said Chip.

"I'm kind o' busy," replied Granny Hooker majestically. She had taken on considerable unapproachableness since her access to fame. "This is my night for gatherin' yarbs an' simples," she added more complacently, noting the package Chip carried.

"I reckon you got time to talk to me a minute. I brought you down a little present—that rose-spangled print you liked so well."

"Come right in," said Granny Hooker, with alacrity. With trembling fingers she laid the package on the kitchen table, and, opening it, spread out the much desired calico. At first a smile of pleasure lit up her face, and then she frowned. "Where's the thread and buttons and linin's?" she demanded.

Chip hesitated, then cleared his throat.

"Well, you see, Mis' Hooker, I'd rather you'd come down to the store and pick them out yourself. 'Course I know'd you'd like this print, but I did n't know whether you'd like some new-fangled buttons I got up there or not."

"Um-huh," grunted Granny, somewhat mollified. "What d'y' want?"

"Well——" Chip cleared his throat again. "Well, you see, Mis' Hooker, you made up a mixture for me to slip in Ett Adams's tea the night of the Union Sociable, and it did n't work. Now, I ain't complainin' about that, but what I want t' know is jes' this: can you give me a charm that will work?"

"To be sure!" said Granny sharply. "I know what was the matter with that other charm. I spoiled the first brewin', and the second ain't never so strong. I ain't got any Easter water either now,

but I'm a-goin' out to-night and gather up some grave-dew, which is even better, some say, though I pin my faith to the Easter water. To-night, when I come back, I'll mix up a fresh brewin', and this time 't won't be for nobody else but jus' you."

"Thank'ee," said Chip. "You come up to the store to-morrow and pick out them buttons and the thread and linin's. By the way," he queried, "you said this time you would n't mix it for anybody but jes' me. Was there other folks last time?"

"That's professional secrets," said Granny severely, bustling the calico away in the top bureau-drawer. All at once, however, she tittered. "Reckon I had ort t' tell ye, though," she said. "The mixture I give you to drop in Ett Adams's tea I drank myself." Chip's face flushed crimson. The boys were not yet through twitting him with Granny Hooker. "'T was jes' an accident, but that's how I come t' know the brew was n't as strong as it'd ort t' be, because the effec's wore off in a couple of hours. I tell ye, Chip, you throw in a red belt to go with this here dress, and I'll tell you somethin' else. Sissy Williams got some o' that very same mixture, an' who do you suppose she gave it to?"

"Me," said Chip. "I reckoned so that night."

"You reckoned right," Granny informed him. "Do you know she's a mighty good-lookin' girl with her eyes shut?"

Chip walked out in deep thoughtfulness, and in deep thoughtfulness he entered his store. He had no more than relieved Fatty Hicks from his post of duty, when who should come in but Sissy Williams herself, to get the mail. There was one letter for her, and it bore upon the corner of the envelope the rubber-stamped business card of Squire Bumpus of Teetersburg.

Chip, having newly anointed eyes, surveyed Sissy critically, as, with downcast lashes, she read her letter. Her cheeks were rounded and there was a suspicion of a dimple in them; her lips were red and curved, her complexion was clear, her hair was waved and glossy.

"By jingo, Sissy, you're gittin' t' be better lookin' every day!" suddenly blurted Chip, with the direct gallantry of Hickoryville.

Sissy's cheeks flamed with incredible swiftness, and her hands trembled so that she dropped the letter. When she had picked it up from the floor she shyly handed it over to Chip. He read it with suddenly sobered and businesslike attention. Sissy's bachelor uncle, Rip Williams, living just out of Teetersburg, was dead, and now Squire Bumpus, as administrator, was writing to Sissy. She was her uncle's favorite relative. He had left her a thousand dollars in cash and his Spindle Creek farm, the best one of all his possessions. Chip solemnly shook hands with her and noted again that swift blush. He handed back her letter gravely.

"Are you goin' right back home, Miss Williams?" he inquired with significant gentleness.

Sissy was.

"Well, if you're there in about half an hour from now, I'm comin' over. And say, I would n't talk about this very much."

"I'll only tell Maw," said Sissy.

Chip opened his mouth to protest, reflecting inwardly that if Mrs. Williams once knew it the town knew it, but he could not in decency object.

"Like as not," he proceeded, "some of the boys 'll be over callin' on you this evenin', but if they come, you remember I've got first say, an' I'm to set out all the rest."

Once more Sissy's face flushed most charmingly.

"All right," she half whispered, and turned away without raising her eyes for the shy glance she would have liked to give him.

Chip locked up an hour earlier than was his custom, and broke straight for Sissy Williams's house, where he "outset" Bud Tease-water and Mealy Jones, whom duty called at eleven o'clock, for at that time the procession, with trembling little Jacob Schnit and his canary in its midst, was to set out for the hawthorn tree in the woods opposite the Baptist graveyard. Over that same ground, but half an hour before, Granny Hooker had tramped her lonely way, fortified with the last verse of the last chapter of the first epistle of John, copied seven times on a little square of paper, folded into the shape of a Maltese cross and put in her left shoe, and further shielded with the red lucky stone that had the skull mark on the face of it, a bit of mold from a grave-stone in the Baptist graveyard, gathered at midnight in the dark of the moon; the foot of a toad, and the white horse-hair. She was going to certain neglected and unhallowed graves in the back part of the Baptist burying-ground, after certain mysterious things which should work potent spells upon all her little world.

CHAPTER XVIII.

BENEATH THE HAWTHORN TREE

BOB MOORE lingered behind as the whispering procession filed into the woods on the other side of the road of the Baptist graveyard. He had made a special trip out there earlier in the evening, as soon, in fact, as he had found out that Dad Adams intended to be in the party, and he had hidden, in a clump of bushes by the roadside, a pumpkin painted with a phosphorescent mixture which he had bought on his trip to Hoadleyville. It was an enormous pumpkin, the biggest one of the fall crop, and he had no difficulty whatever in finding it, for as he

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peered down under the bushes it glowed out at him with a most uncanny green glare. The pumpkin looked a trifle insecure as it rested under the bushes at the very edge of the bank where the road had been cut down through the knoll between woods and cemetery, but there was no better place to hide it unless he should take it back into the woods. Bob puzzled for a moment whether to secrete himself here with the pumpkin, or to go into the woods with the others, and slip out ahead of Dad. The desire for companionship, however, won the argument.

It had been queer to see how the fun had died out of this expedition. Starting uproariously from Hickoryville, with many sly words of advice for the ear of "the Dutchman" alone, the suppressed hilarity had quieted more and more as the procession approached the woods. Not one man in that crowd but had a touch of eerie superstition creep over him as he turned his back upon those white headstones across the road, and a positive chill settled down upon them as they filed into the dark woods. What conversation they indulged in was brief and in whispers, and they clung together almost shoulder to shoulder. Numbers alone gave them courage. Long John Flanders, the biggest coward of them all—far worse than trembling little Jacob Schnit, who had a sturdy quality under his timidity, after all—was the only one who betrayed any disposition whatever to boisterousness. He whistled, but as he drew within the woods his whistling died down until it became a mere soundless expulsion of breath between his lips. Bob Moore joined them just as they halted beneath a thick clump of oaks, beyond which, on the side of a little open space, stood the haw-tree, and here Jacob, urged forward by Lafe Hardy and Fatty Hicks, determinedly swallowed his heart and strode courageously forward alone to dig within that protected earth where, only, Pfeiffer might find rest.

The moment he plunged his spade into the earth, to a meaningless string of muttered incantations with which he had been thoroughly provided, the exodus began. Bob Moore was the first to slip away, secreting himself in the clump of bushes where he had hidden the phosphorescent pumpkin, and from this concealment he scrutinized each of the silent figures which tiptoed stealthily out of the woods. Dad Adams was not among them. Bob waited. The first comers remained in the road until the balance had joined them. Long John Flanders came out with three others, and looked longingly back towards his home. The company was all going the other way, and Long John, as any one who knew him might have foreseen, trudged reluctantly back toward Hickoryville, wishing at every step that he had gone in the other direction. The group had waited only long enough to count noses in a perfunctory manner. That two were missing besides Jacob, might, under other circumstances, have impressed them, but now they were rather in a hurry. Their whole plan had been to leave poor Jacob

Schnit all alone in the midnight woods, and, this accomplished, there was no need that they should stay any longer in the neighborhood of the Baptist graveyard; so they moved off down the road more quickly than was really necessary. The sight of that retreating group was too much for Bob Moore. Reluctantly he gave up the special surprise he had prepared for Dad Adams; besides, Dad was not among those others, and he might have slipped away ahead of them. Bob studied the big pumpkin in some hesitation. It was a tremendously heavy pumpkin, and if he attempted to carry it he could not catch up with the rapidly receding men. Suddenly he plunged down the bank and started out after them. As he did so he thought that he saw something white rise from behind the fence of the Baptist graveyard, but he did *not* stop to take a good look! He had an unaccountable eagerness to catch up with his fellow conspirators, and he made a straight plunge for them without noticing that he had slipped and fallen to his hands and knees as he came down the bank. He merely leaped straight into the air and hurried after the crowd.

They heard his rapid footsteps behind them and quickened their pace before they looked back. That backward glance was a hasty one, but sufficient. There, upon the bank above the road, and just outside the Baptist graveyard fence, loomed a tall, white figure. Lafe Hardy urged that they go back and see what it was, but he kept on walking while he urged. Two or three of the more venturesome looked back again, and at that moment the tall white Thing waved its arms high in the air. That was enough. Pride alone kept that procession from becoming a panic, instead of a mere run. Two or three of the more speedy ones, finding themselves separated from the main body, held back. It was better to go more slowly and be all together than to run and be alone.

It was not until they were well out of sight of the uncanny place that they slowed down to a real walk, when Bud Teasewater, after a long breath, began to explain the wonders of imagination, and by the time they had reached Hickoryville he had proved to them, one and all, that what they had seen was merely the effect of overstrained mental processes. Long John Flanders dwelt more eagerly than any one upon this explanation, for he had still to make the lonely homeward trip. One by one the members of the partly dropped off at their own homes and hurried inside, until only Hen Damm was left at his gate opposite Jacob Schnit's house. Him Long John held as long as possible, and when Hen had gone in Long John was left the only outdoors soul in all Hickoryville. Slowly he wandered down the street. Every window was dark, every house was gloomy. In the aforetime Widow Moore's front downstairs room there did a light show at the cracks of the window-blind, but what business had Long John at the Mrs. Jennie

Adams house? He hesitated a long time before this last human habitation, and then was forced to start upon his lonely homeward journey, holding his little bundle of "ha'nt insurance" tightly in both hands.

In the meantime poor Jacob Schnit stood all alone beneath the haw-tree. He had called aloud to all his companions one by one by name until his own voice frightened him, and, with his heart beating so loudly that the sound of it in his ears shut out all other sounds, he stood above the grave of Pfeiffer, afraid to move and afraid to stay. An owl in a tree near by suddenly let out a mournful hoot, and supplied the motive power at last to Jacob's fright-stiffened limbs. With an answering whoop, jerked out of him without his volition, Jacob tore out of the woods, but as he emerged upon the bank a tall, white-robed figure across the road rose slowly before his distended eyes. Jacob's feet fortunately slipped from under him at the brink of the bank and he came sliding down, otherwise he would have been frozen to the spot. The jolt, however, loosened his joints once more, and, springing to his feet, he tore out in the direction of Hickoryville, being enveloped, ten seconds later, in a cloud of dust which moved on and on and never stopped until it passed Long John just outside the township limits. Long John hurried to one side of the road to let this human cannon-ball flash by, and then, after a long five minutes of further hesitation as to whether more horror lay before him than behind, he started once more upon his homeward journey.

When Jacob, gaining his feet, had started down the road at that remarkable burst of speed, Dad Adams, in pillow case and sheet, jumped down into the middle of the road, so that if Jacob looked back he should have the full benefit of the apparition; but Jake never looked back, and Dad, laughing, scrambled up the bank. As he neared the top his foot started to slip, and he lunged forward, grabbing at the graveyard fence. An unearthly shriek from within the cemetery, much louder than the one Jacob Schnit had uttered, startled him until his heart bumped into his Adams apple, and a dark, humped, and bent figure went bounding among the tombstones, and, with shriek after shriek, hurdled square over the low hedge fence and streaked down hill and across meadow!

CHAPTER XIX.

THE RIVAL GHOSTS

THAT misshapen figure in the darkness had startled Dad immeasurably. He was not instantly sure whether it was man or devil, and the echoing shrieks, timed with rhythmic accuracy to about every third jump, rather got on his nerves. He could scarcely have known that it was Granny Hooker, who, disturbed in her search for unhal-

lowed materials, was streaking it out for Hickoryville with an agility that was astounding in view of her years, and a speed that would almost have put Jacob Schnit's flight to shame. It would shake the nerves of nearly any man to have dark figures go bounding out from among white tombstones at midnight with unearthly shrieks, and had it not been for the Adams stubbornness Dad would have given up his project then and there. However, no Adams had ever been made to back down by man or demon, he reflected, and with great determination he sat down in the shelter of the hedge which kept him from being seen from the direction of Hickoryville, to wait for Long John Flanders.

It was a long wait, and there are no words to tell with what bitterness Dad upbraided himself for the fluttering feeling which *would* rise in his chest! In the graveyard back of him the dried branches of a dead tree creaked suddenly, and Dad jumped so that he bit his tongue. In shifting his own position he snapped a twig and said "Ouch!" The moon darted behind a cloud, and the sudden darkness which fell upon him made him want to cry out in fear. Dad had often been out alone at night, but he had never known before how full of sounds night was: mysterious, inexplicable, uncanny sounds, sounds which froze the blood in one's veins and the marrow in one's bones, sounds which set the heart throbbing and the nerves tingling, sounds which seemed to work invisible springs in a man's body and set them to jumping and jerking. The fact was that in spite of all Dad's hard-headedness and in spite of all his determination, the succession of unexplainable pumpkins and all their attendant phenomena had shaken his sturdy disbelief, so that, without knowing it, he had become gradually and unconsciously convinced that there were more things in heaven and earth than had been dreamed of in his philosophy.

Under such circumstances, it was not strange that Dad's mind should revert to pumpkins and should dwell there. By way of taking his mind from the horror which was gradually creeping over it, he started to count them, and he was surprised to find how easily he could remember each and every one that had come to torment him, astonished to realize what vivid impressions they had made upon him. There had been thirty-eight of them since that morning when he had found the first one upon his porch, and they all had holes burned through their stems. He was sorry when the count was done, because the projected phantoms of his mind arose stronger than ever, and he started a recounting. It was no use. The thirty-eight pumpkins seemed now to have a more direful significance than ever before. He could see pumpkins wherever he looked. They were hovering and wavering mysteriously in the air beneath all those dark shapes of the woods across the road, they were behind him in the graveyard; everywhere his world was full of pumpkins!

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He impatiently arose, and as he did so there appeared before him, directly in the road below, having approached noiselessly in the dust, a tall, white-robed figure which suddenly threw up both its arms and emitted a piercing shriek, to which the shrieks of Jacob Schnit and Granny Hooker were but whispers. It was the most bloodcurdling shriek to be heard this side of Hades, and the mere fact that the tall, white figure spread out its arms and sped, still shrieking, away from him, did not relieve him in the least; for Dad Adams was beyond the power of reason! This climax was too much for any set of quivering nerves.

Dad turned instinctively back to the fence behind him. The tallest monument in the Baptist graveyard arose just before him, and he whirled from it in crazed terror. Before he could stop himself, he had plunged down the bank where that first awful apparition had confronted him, and as he did so the big pumpkin which had trembled on the opposite bank beneath the sheltering bushes, broke away the bit of turf which had supported it, and came tumbling down toward him! It was unmistakably a pumpkin, an enormous one, and it glowed with a baleful green light; moreover, the declivity of the road was in the Hickoryville direction, and the pumpkin, having rolled down to the road, began to roll after Dad.

That was the last straw! Dad Adams, like any other craven, lit out for Hickoryville with all the might that lay in his legs, while Long John Flanders, clad like Dad in sheet and pillow-case, was tearing with all his might in the opposite direction, toward the shelter of the Flanders cabin. Long John's "ha'nt insurance" had consisted of these two indispensable articles of bedding, and his whole plan of immunity had been based upon the thought that if, perchance, he should meet with any ghosts, they might take him for one of their number and let him pass in peace!

The strength, and consequently the speed, of Long John were as nothing to the strength and the speed of Dad Adams, however. For the first time in all his life, Dad was thoroughly frightened and did not care who knew it. He cared for nothing but to gain the shelter of Hickoryville and his own roof as quickly as possible. In the dust before him were many footprints, far apart, where men had leaped from their strong right legs to their strong left legs and vice versa, but the length between the footprints of Dad outstretched them all; and stone walls would not have stopped him, for the big green pumpkin was right behind him, in fancy, up hill and down, with all its attendant demons and ministers of evil. In place of his panic decreasing with distance, it increased, so that when he stopped at his own place he was in a greater funk than ever. He fumbled a moment at the gate; it would scarcely pull open under his clumsy fingers. As he was about

to dash inside the yard, there was a mighty thump inside his front porch! The thirty-ninth pumpkin was just behind him, and the fortieth had arrived!

He stopped and looked, aghast!

In through the meshwork above the solid wall of boards, he suddenly saw a spherical shape flash into view, hover and sway, and a second later thump upon the floor! It could not possibly have bounded up so far unless it had jumped up of its own volition. Even as he looked, again a spherical shape flashed into view, hovered and swayed, and again there came a thump, with this time a smashing crash that he knew full well must be the sound of a bursting pumpkin; and, indeed, seeds flew out from under the lower board which he had nailed around his porch! He glared around him wildly. In the neighboring house a window blind suddenly went up, and in the bright light which flowed from the parlor stood revealed Mrs. Jennie Adams. In four seconds by the watch, Dad Adams was at the front door of the Moore residence!

CHAPTER XX.

NUMBER FORTY-THREE

"WHY, Dad Adams!" exclaimed the cheery voice of the one-time Widow Moore as she opened the door. "What a queer riffin' you got on!"

Ah, it was good to hear a normal human voice! Dad appreciated that fact before he cast a sheepish look down at the torn and bedraggled sheet which he had draped around him. The pillow-case he had yanked off in the first rod, so that it would not interfere with his running.

"Step right in," his wife invited, seeing that Dad had found no words as yet. "I reckon you must 'a' been out playin' a prank on somebody."

Dad stepped gratefully inside the door, to find Bob regarding him with a grin; but it was not in Dad to lie.

"No, Jennie, I'm a plumb born fool," he confessed as soon as he had breath for it. "I went out to scare Long John Flanders, and I got scared stiff myself, and that's a fact!"

"Mercy me!" said Mrs. Moore. "Bob, go over and tell your sister Etty that her Paw's come home. She's up yet, Dad. She's been worried about you, and, besides, there's been strange goings on about the house to-night."

"Yes, I know. It's them da—they blessed pumpkins. I give in. If they can get onto my porch and bounce around in there after I have boarded the door and window up and boarded the porch in that way, I'm willin' t' say I'm a lumpus. I don't know nothin'! Give

me a four-leaf clover to put in my shoe. I 'm a-goin' t' yank down every horse-shoe I got tacked up over my barn door, and turn 'em the right side up. I 'm a-goin' t' carry a rabbit's foot an' a lucky stone. I 'm a-goin' t' drive a cross o' nails in my shoe-heels. Tell you, Mis' Mo— Mis' Adams, I 'm about as ignorant a man as ever walked in leather!"

"Take off your things and stay a while, Dad," invited his hostess. "Seems to me there's a chance o' your gettin' some horse sense after all."

Bob waited to hear no more. He was already out of the door and calling vociferously for Etta, even before he vaulted the fence. She was out of doors in a surprisingly short space of time, flushed and laughing, but half ready to cry. Bob gathered her up the second she emerged from the door, and if in his exuberance he carried her across the lot and set her over the fence, why, *that's* nobody's business.

Dad was making an open confession of the horrible events of the night when Bob and Etta came in, after a slight scuffle outside which seemed to have pleased them both, and they listened in prim silence until he was through, although Bob snorted when Dad told of the great, green-glowing pumpkin which had rolled out of the woods and chased him home; and it gave none the less satisfaction to Bob that he now understood the white figure which had sent the practical jokers home in such hot haste.

"By the way, Dad," said Bob, with a wink at Etta and his mother, "Ett an' me's tired a-waitin'. We'll get married now any Friday you say."

"Friday!" exclaimed Dad. "Look a-here, don't you do it, children; don't you fly in the face o' things that away. You get married on a Sunday, or if you wait till Christmas I'll add an extra twenty acres. That's the safest day in the year."

"Well, it ain't so fur off," said Bob philosophically. "I guess we can wait that long. I don't reckon Squire Bumpus will want to come over here on Christmas, though. I reckon we'll have to drive over to Teetersburg."

"Squire Bumpus! No, siree, you get married in a church!"

"Methodist, I reckon?" interposed the late Widow Moore.

Dad flushed.

"Have it your own way. Have it your own way. I ain't got any more spunk than a rabbit. Of course, if you could have it in the Methodist church—no, let old Sparrows do the job. He ain't more 'n half paid anyhow."

Mrs. Jennie laughed. It was not in human nature, especially the Adams nature, for Dad to have resisted making that thrust.

"I was jes' figurin' mebbe that 't would n't be necessary to build a new house right away," observed Mrs. Jennie, as she sat down on the

sofa beside Dad and helped him to untie a recalcitrant knot in the sheet which had been defying his fingers all this while. "I don't like to think of the children so far away right at first, an' I was thinkin' that mebbe we could let the young folks have your house, and you and me keep this one."

Dad gulped. It was the last sacrifice, but he gave it up manfully.

"I reckon that would be a good plan," he admitted. "Seems to me as if I don't want to go back into that house no more anyhow, nor even to have Ett go, leastwise till the pumpkins stop comin'."

"Well, the pumpkins are goin' t' stop comin'. Your word's out, ain't it, Dad?"

"Yes, 't is," he admitted, but with sudden suspicion.

"Well, the word of an Adams is as good as any other man's black and white," Etta boasted, "and now that it's out, I don't mind confessin' that the pumpkins had to stop coming, because I've only got one left in the attic, and, goodness knows, if I was to take any more up there it 'ud break my back."

"In the attic!" Dad exclaimed.

His wife laughed aloud. Only that night she had been taken into the despairing Etta's full confidence, but it was all news to Bob. He had taken part in one or two pumpkin episodes himself, but the main source of the pumpkins was as much a puzzle to him as to Dad.

"Yes," Etta replied; "if you'll just watch close, I'll show you how the ha'n'ts have been working. You know, Dad, when the porch was built on our house, with its ceilin' and its deep shed roof, the roof covered over the little low window that was n't much use anyhow in my gable, and we never took out the window. I kept the bureau settin' in front of it all these years, and that bureau's on rollers that's mighty easy to move. I found that porch roof was a mighty handy place to hide rubbish away in, and I found a couple of loose boards in the ceiling of it. I reckon the loose boards and the window and the bureau helps explain how a ha'n't could burn a hole through the stem of a pumpkin with a hat-pin and run a stout cord through the hole, and let down the pumpkin to the porch floor, and let loose one end of the cord, which could then be pulled back up by the other end, eh? And you know I always was an early riser. Come on, Bob;" and Etta led the way out and over to the Adams house, where, presently, lowered slowly through the porch ceiling, a big round pumpkin came slipping gently down.

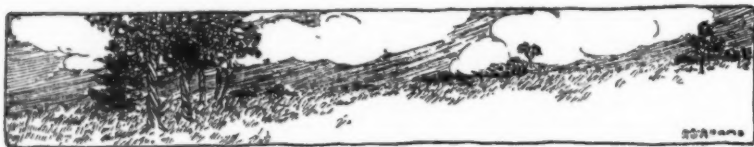
"That makes forty-three," said Dad, as he leaned across the fence with his arm around his wife.

Mrs. Jennie Adams laughed softly.

"I reckon you'll be as set as ever now against signs and such things," she surmised.

Dad pondered the matter slowly.

"No, I won't," he said. "I reckon, after all, that in spite of all this hocus-pocus there's some things we don't know about. Whether it's right or wrong, I can see it stickin' out that I'm goin' t' be kind o' skeery the rest o' my life. I'm goin' t' cross my fingers an' touch wood to keep away bad luck every time I make a wish, an' I'm goin' t' say, 'Money, money, money,' every time I see a shootin' star. But say, ain't that Ett o' mine a smart girl!"



LO THE PURE PURITAN

By Elizabeth Maury Coombs

SO many of our interesting American fauna have met with extinction that I feel like entering a plea for the Puritan. We think now with keen regret of the long-gone bison herd, charging in a cloud of dust upon the unwary Western traveller, and effectually preventing his ever writing a book of travel. We could almost weep when we see this terror of the plains wired into some wayside park. He was not agreeable, but he was individual. Shall we not shed a few of the unwept tears we had reserved for the buffalo when we view the last of the Puritans analyzing the bars of his cage at the zoo? Or when we gaze upon a stuffed specimen of the New England conscience mounted in a life-like way on the crotch of an "ancient elm," moulting in the glass case of a museum? We drop the tear of sentiment upon the Indian—now that he is not near enough to return our courtesy with the tomahawk—let us now call a meeting and weep for the Puritan. So scarce is the pure Puritan becoming that the next generation may feel a few salt drops brimming to their eyes when some wintry day they see the bluff old back-country farmer sleighing to town, snugly tucked in a rare warm robe of Puritan hide—the last of his race, slain by American laughter, the cruelest weapon ever aimed at a brother's breast!

Why not grant this little rock-walled field of New England to the Puritan for his reservation—a mental reservation, perhaps—but always a happy hunting ground for him and his conscience, before he and it, too, meet with extinction in the flashlight of humor?

AMERICAN SOCIETY IN 1783

AS SEEN BY TWO FRENCH NOBLEMEN

By Mrs. John Von Vorst

BEAUTIFUL, picturesque eighteenth-century America! How far distant it seems already, with its militant army, its colonial dames, its glistening mahogany, its triumphant adoration of liberty, its stirring atmosphere of self-sacrifice and idealism! The pictures which come to us first-hand from the sight-seers of those early American days, we study fondly and with astonishment, seeking in the youthful demeanor of our native land those traits of which we have most reason to be proud. Weary with poor reproductions of the romantic Revolutionary times, we all the more enjoy the original descriptions which bring near to us this alluring past.

Shortly after the surrender of Cornwallis at Yorktown, toward the close of the war, the Comte de Ségur and the Prince de Broglie, two young French noblemen, visited America. In their letters home they give an account of what they saw, relating thus, in an intimate manner, their adventures in the United States, their impressions of the country, of the people, of the army, of its general in chief, Washington, and of the society women whom they met, especially those of Philadelphia and Newport.

These letters, which for a century and a quarter have mellowed in the family archives, the present Marquis de Ségur, Member of the French Academy, has loaned for this publication. They were written in 1783 by these two young men who made part of the same expedition to America, but who were of most different character. The Prince de Broglie, debonair, somewhat flippant, comments ironically upon the superficial aspect of the young republic, slightly contemptuous of certain democratic ways which shock his effete sensibilities. The Comte de Ségur, on the other hand, with his extraordinary comprehension of all that was genuine and just, true and great, was immediately captivated by the spirit of America. To the end of his long and remarkable career, he never forgot his enthusiasm for the United States, and his opportunities for comparison were extended: Colonel under Louis XVI., he became Ambassador during the French Revolution, Coun-

cillor of State under the Consulate, Senator and Grand Master of Ceremonies under Napoleon, Peer of France during the Restoration, and between-whiles he was a great traveller, a poet, a historian, a playwright, a member of the Academy. As a child, he lived in the intimacy of Louis XV., and later he counted as his friends Louis XVI., Marie Antoinette, Washington, Frederick the Great, Catherine II., Napoleon. Yet, like Tallyrand, he acknowledged that no more lasting impression had been made upon him than by America and the Americans.

The first of his letters, which are addressed to his wife, Lady of Honor to Marie Antoinette at the Court of Versailles, is a mere fragment jotted down at sea, after a violent encounter with an English warship off Bermuda. The Comte de Ségur, the Prince de Broglie, the Vicomte de Noailles, with a number of fellow officers, had set out from France with two men-of-war, the *Aigle* and the *Gloire*, carrying to the American army an important treasure from its allies.

How I thought of you [the Comte de Ségur writes], my beloved one, at that terrible moment, with a shower of bullets raining about my ears! Tenderly I embraced your portrait in the presence of the Prince de Broglie, who was so much touched that he also kissed it. Under any other circumstances, I should have been jealous.

Arrived at last on the Atlantic coast, under the most trying and dangerous conditions, with one ship aground, the other under English fire, he writes:

We feared all was lost in the Delaware, but we were able to escape by an almost incredible miracle. The *Gloire* kept afloat, only the *Aigle* sunk. It will be days before I can recover any of my belongings.

The two million five hundred thousand francs in gold which these young Frenchmen were bearing to Washington lay for some time buried in the sands of the Delaware, hidden there from the knowledge of the English, until they could be rescued. But no such material difficulties as being "without a shirt or a servant" could deter the ardor of so gallant a soldier as the Comte de Ségur. He set out at once, alone, on horseback, to join Mr. de Luzerne, His Majesty's representative at Philadelphia, for whom he brought messages from Louis XVI. Of his arrival there, he gives the following account:

I reached Philadelphia with the hope and intention of remaining a week, but I had scarcely twenty-four hours in which to see this city, which is the capital of the United States. However, from a mere glimpse, it was not difficult to predict the great and prosperous destiny of America. Philadelphia, the "city of brothers," is situated on the west bank of the Delaware. It contains a hundred thousand

inhabitants. Its broad streets and the elegant simplicity of the houses are very striking, in spite of the irregularity of the many little landings, which each merchant has constructed according to his fantasy on the border of the river. . . . The name of Penn, founder of the city, will live forever, as he was the only European who legally established a State in America without cementing it by the blood of the unfortunate tribes of this hemisphere. . . . The whole city is a splendid temple raised in the name of tolerance, for it unites a great number of Catholics, of Presbyterians, of Calvinists, of Lutherans, of Unitarians, of Anabaptists, of Methodists, of Quakers, who each of them practise their form of worship in entire liberty, all living together in the most perfect harmony.

The young officer would, as he says, gladly have prolonged his stay, but the day following his arrival the Baron de Vioménil sent an envoy commanding him to set out at once for New York State. The despatches which he was bearing were impatiently awaited by Rochambeau and Washington, who were then in camp on the Hudson River. Mounted upon a "fairly good horse," the Comte de Ségur resumed his journey, and neither fatigue nor discomfort prevented his seeing and enjoying the country through which he passed.

Everywhere [he writes], in the towns, in the cities, in the private houses where I stopped, I found the same simplicity, the same courtesy, the same hospitality, the same zealous interest in a common cause, the same eagerness to assist me in every way to reach as soon as possible my destination. Each step of the way I received two contrary impressions, one produced by a wild and beautiful nature, the other by the well-tilled fields, showing in the variety of their products a civilized world. . . . Nowhere is there a slightest trace of laziness or vulgarity. Every one displays the modest assurance and tranquillity of the independent man, who recognizes as his superior nothing but the law; who has none of the vanity, the prejudices, the servility, of our European society. Such has been my impression throughout the journey. . . . Here no profession is ridiculed nor looked down upon, and, under the most diverse conditions, all preserve the same rights. Idleness alone is considered shameful. . . . At first I was a trifle surprised when I went into a tavern to find it kept by a captain, a major, a colonel, who conversed equally well about his campaigns against the English, the management of his farm, the sale of his crops. The military career does not prevent any one from having another profession. I was still more astonished when, having responded to the questions which they asked concerning my family, and having explained that my father was a general and Minister of War at the Court of Louis XVI., they inquired what *business* he was in.

The Prince de Broglie, who followed about the same route to join Washington and Rochambeau, gives the following description of what he saw:

I was alone with my two valets, and so could abandon myself to my thoughts. I contemplated with pleasure this growing people and country. From time to time I paused to consider the imposing views. I traversed immense forests, with no sign of a human being, and every four or five miles came across a village, well built, with well-dressed inhabitants, tall, strong men, proud already of the freedom they had won. The affection they seemed to feel for their country inclines me greatly in its favor, and the sight of a certain number of very pretty women did not detract from the generally pleasing impression. . . . I stopped at night to dine and sleep, and everywhere I was received with perfect hospitality. I enjoyed talking with my hosts. We took our dinner together without ceremony, and when my hostess was pretty I kissed her, without apparently shocking her husband. These little attentions, and the amiability I displayed in discussing politics with my host, resulted generally in my being given the best room in the house. I also succeeded in procuring what was still rarer: fresh sheets, which had not already been used by some other gentleman traveller, and I showed such an aversion for sleeping with any one, that I was assured no new-comer would rouse me in the night. All these little privileges of which we know nothing in Paris are especial favors in America, where the people are not as clean as they are sincere.

It was only on the 26th of September that the Comte de Ségur, who had left Paris on the 12th of April, reached his final destination. The same day he wrote to his wife, from the camp at Peekskill:

Here I am at last, having reached our army. I saw with great interest that terrifying North River, or Hudson, which is over two and a half miles wide, and which flows between two chains of uninhabited mountains, covered with ancient pines, with aged oaks and fir trees. This wild and austere aspect awakened the most profound and noble feelings, whose romantic melancholy was intensified by my conversation with Mauduit. He recalled to me all that had taken place on this singular stage, where for the last five years liberty has been fighting tyranny. As one looks upon these gigantic masses of rock, these bottomless abysses, these limitless forests, one cannot conceive what folly led the English to hope for one moment that they could subdue a people animated by the love of freedom, and guarded by such inexpugnable ramparts.

Concerning the American army and its chief, the Comte de Ségur gives his impressions:

I had expected [he writes] to find the soldiers ignorant, badly kept, the officers lacking in the polish of our older civilization. I recollected the early moments of their revolution, when farmhands and workmen who had never handled a gun precipitated themselves, pell-mell, in the name of their country, to fight the British ranks, presenting to their astonished eyes a mass of hayseeds who bore no other insignia nor sign of a uniform than a cap upon which was written the word "Liberty." You can imagine, then, how surprised I

was to find a disciplined army, with every appearance of order, reason, knowledge, and experience. The generals, the aides-de-camp, and the other officers showed in their bearing and in their speech nobility, self-respect, and that natural kindliness which seems to me as much above politeness as a sweet expression is better than a forced smile of affected good-humor. . . . One of my most ardent desires was to see the hero of America, General Washington. The Comte de Rochambeau had the goodness to present me to him. Too often reality falls far below what we have imagined to ourselves, and our admiration diminishes as we perceive the object which had excited it. But the true General Washington was in absolute harmony with the idea I had formed of him. His appearance revealed him as he was: simple, great, dignified, calm, good, strong; these traits were written in his face and in his bearing as being the qualities of his character. His figure was noble, erect; the expression of his features gentle, amiable; his smile agreeable; his manner simple without familiarity. He has none of the pomp of a general in one of our monarchies; everything proclaims him to be the hero of a republic. He inspires rather than commands respect, and in the eyes of all who surround him one can see true affection, absolute confidence in the chief upon whom they seemed to place all their reliance. General Washington received me with kindness; he spoke to me of the gratitude which his country would preserve always toward the King of France for his generous assistance. He expressed the highest praise for General Rochambeau, he commended the bravery and discipline in our army, and he pronounced a few very flattering words about my father, his long service in the army, his numerous wounds, "worthy ornaments," said he, "for a Minister of War."

The Prince de Broglie, who saw Washington at about the same moment, adds a few details of a more intimate character:

This General is forty-nine years old. He is tall, splendidly built, very well proportioned. His manner is cold, though polite; his eyes are thoughtful, and not so much brilliant as attentive. He is opposed to all show and vainglory. His character is serene, he has never shown the slightest temper. . . . Mr. Washington receives no salary as general. He refused it, not being in need. The expenses of his table, only, are paid by the government. Every day he has about thirty people for dinner. Generally, this is the time of the day when he is the gayest. At dessert he eats an enormous quantity of walnuts, and when the conversation amuses him he goes on eating nuts for hours, drinking a number of "healths," according to the English and American custom. It is called "toasting." They begin always by drinking to the United States, then to the King and Queen of France, then to the success of the allied armies. Then sometimes they give what they call a "sentiment." For example: "To our success with the enemy and the beautiful girls, to our advantage in war and in love."

The Comte de Ségur was delighted with the warm welcome extended to him. He writes to his wife:

I have been wonderfully well received here by the officers and generals. They seem to feel grateful to me for the sacrifice I have made. . . . I should love to live in this country with you. Believe me, it is a better country than ours for people who value goodness. If you want to escape corruption, you must more or less escape from mankind. The lonely forests are the best fatherland for honest folk. I try to show zeal and sympathy. . . . Tell Lafayette I am in a country full of him, and where every one adores him.*

In accordance with the plans proposed in the despatches of which the Comte de Ségur was the bearer, it was decided that, through an attack upon the West Indies by the French fleet, an attempt might be made to divert the English from New York and force them into concluding peace. Before setting sail, however, from American shores, the French fleet remained a month or more anchored off Newport. This delay enabled Ségur and Broglie to become somewhat acquainted with American society. The Prince de Broglie writes:

Let me speak of the women, for they are always a most important element for a Frenchman. . . . I made my début in American society at Dover, a pretty little town of fifteen hundred inhabitants, under the auspices of Mr. de Lauzun. I knew only a few words of English, but I understood very well how to drink excellent tea, with still better cream; I had learned how to say to a young girl that she was "pretty," and to a gentleman that he was "sensible," which means at the same time good, honest, amiable, etc. . . . For the moment, I needed no more to succeed.

Lauzun conducted the Prince to the house of Mrs. Morris, wife of the Controller-General of State. The Morris house he describes as "simple but well built and well kept up"; the doors and tables, he says, were of superb polished mahogany, the locks and andirons were of shining brass, the tea-cups were set out in symmetrical order, and the mistress of the house was fair and comely.

I took some excellent tea [writes the Prince], and I should still be taking it, I think, if our Ambassador had not mercifully informed me that I must put my spoon across the cup when I wanted this hot-water inquisition to end. It would be almost as rude, he explained, to refuse a cup of tea when it is offered to you, as it would be impolite of your hostess to offer you another cup after the ceremony of the spoon has indicated your desires.

In his ironical vein the Prince de Broglie comments upon the Philadelphia society women:

* Ségur, though only a few years older than Lafayette, was his uncle by marriage.

The ladies of Philadelphia, although they are quite gorgeously dressed, are not generally turned out with much taste. Their head-dresses (and their heads) are heavier and not so pleasing as the French. Although the women are well made, they are lacking in grace, and they curtsy rather badly. Nor did they excel in dancing, but to compensate they make very good tea.

A word upon the moral atmosphere gives a suggestion of certain snobbish tendencies:

The spirit which reigns in Philadelphia being entirely republican, one would suppose that the strictest equality would be observed among the inhabitants. Here as everywhere, however, the pride and vanity so natural to man make themselves felt. Although all idea of nobility or titles of especial distinction is prohibited, the Philadelphians who can date their residence back to the foundation of the city look upon themselves as superior, and this attitude is even more marked among those who, added to this great advantage, are possessed of much wealth.

Boston receives a more flattering note:

This city [writes the Prince de Broglie], very commercial in time of peace, unites necessarily a great number of well-to-do people and a few very rich merchants. Luxury is of longer standing here than in any other town of America; it is quite flourishing, in fact, and the result, so far as society and the food are concerned, is an absence of the somewhat rustic coarseness of American usages in general. In Boston one drinks better wines, one has napkins at table, each person has a glass of his own, one's plate is changed as often as one wishes. All of which is really magnificent.

The definite enthusiasm of this somewhat supersensitive personage was to be roused at last by Newport: "that charm-spot which all our officers speak of with regret." It would seem to have been, as in the present times, the centre of worldly existence in America.

On the evening of their arrival in Newport, the Prince de Broglie, the Comte de Ségur, and the other officers were taken by Colonel Vauban to see a certain Mr. Champlain, "renowned for his wealth, but better known even, among the French army, on account of his pretty daughter."

She was not in the parlor when we entered [writes the Prince de Broglie], but she appeared a moment later. It is needless to say that we examined her closely and that she could well bear the scrutiny, for she has beautiful eyes, an agreeable mouth, a very fair complexion, a pretty figure, a tiny foot, a most alluring presence. Moreover, she was dressed and her hair was arranged with taste, and she both understood and spoke our language. . . . Several other ladies whose

acquaintance I made completed my impression that Newport sheltered more than one rose.

The Comte de Ségur, whose observations are rather more poetic, found the young girls of Newport, and especially one of them, captivating. He writes:

The town of Newport, well and regularly built, contains a numerous population, well-to-do and happy. We were entertained in the most charming reunions of men well educated and modest, of pretty women whose talents graced their beauty. The name and the charms of Miss Champlain and the two Miss Hunters and of several others, have remained indelibly impressed upon the memory of the French officers. . . . One lovely creature, who seemed more like a spirit than a woman, was Polly Leiton, the daughter of a serious old Quaker. Her gown was white, like herself. The muslin of her ample fichu, the covetous batiste cap which scarcely let her blonde hair be seen, her virginal manner, seemed vainly desirous of concealing from us the finest and most charming visage. Her eyes were like two mirrors which reflected the sweetness of a pure and gentle soul. She received us with a naïve confidence which charmed me, and the "thee-thou" of her speech gave to our new acquaintance the air of an old friendship. I doubt that any masterpiece of art could equal this masterpiece of nature. In our conversation she astonished me by the unusual candor of her questions:

"Thee has neither wife nor child in Europe, since thee leaves thy country and comes to carry on this wicked warfare?"

"Why," said I, "it is in your interest, and to defend your liberty that I have come to fight the English."

"The English?" she replied. "They have done thee no harm; and our liberty—what is that to thee? Thee should not meddle with other people's affairs."

What could I reply to such an angel, for truly such I felt her to be? As a matter of fact, had I not been happily married, I might, while defending American liberty, have lost my own at the feet of Polly Leiton.

Finally, there is this last letter written to the Comtesse de Ségur at the Court of Versailles:

ON BOARD THE "SOVERAIN," DECEMBER 1783.

To-morrow or the following day we set sail, and I feel infinite regret at leaving this country where the people are absolutely what they should be: loyal, frank, honest, and free. They think, and say, and do, as they please. There is no necessity for being rich, nor base, nor false, nor mad, nor a satellite, nor a soldier. You can be unpretentious, extraordinary, a traveller, a sedentary, a politician, a man of letters, a merchant, occupied or a person of leisure: nobody is shocked at you. By observing certain simple laws, by respecting the customs of the country, you are at peace and happy. It is by defying the same that you attract attention in Paris. I have been treated as

a brother everywhere in America. I have met only with cordiality, hospitality, confidence. The young girls are coquettish in securing husbands, and the women are wise in keeping them. I don't know whether this country can maintain forever such purity of morals, but were they to last a century only, a century of happiness is not to be counted for nothing. In the midst of horrors attending a revolution, they so little suspect their fellow men of dishonesty that their small wooden houses in the depths of vast forests have no locks on the door, no bolts, and their safes and closets remain open in the rooms where they receive perfect strangers. . . . Ah, how my heart aches to leave this country!



THE LITTLE SHUT-IN

BY MARY BYERLEY

THE green way of the wood—
For that way Sherwood lies—
And the brown road and the sea's road,
These are my Paradise.

But I must rove on feet
That cannot move at all,
O'er cliff and veldt and towering hill
And angry waterfall.

And some there be who say,
"Poor child, your window's view,
Your easy chair, your pleasant room—
Just these are left to you!"

But oh, each glad new day
That bids me long and look
All filled with happy wonder,
Forgetting—in a book!



THERE is always one kiss in each life that destroys the flavor of all others.

THE happy bride bends upon all spinsters a look of divine compassion.

THE LADY AND THE ACROBAT

By Anna Costantini

THE shrieks of children at play—boys with their marbles, girls with skipping-ropes and games of hop-scotch—resounded through the dreary little street, where the only relief to the sordid monotony of workmen's houses was afforded by the stolid wooden Indian outside the tobacconist's at the corner, and the garish advertisements of soaps and cereals, displayed by the grocer across the way.

I took Cousin Sally's letter out of my bag and looked at it again. Yes, this was the address—27 Pearl Street—but could it be possible? Frankly, I could not imagine the dainty old lady in these surroundings. Number 27 was just like every other house in the narrow street—a mean, uncompromising little box of a place, with a busybody mirror. But as I approached the door, I noticed the clean, stiffly-starched curtains in the front windows, the well-scrubbed stone step, the shining brass of the door-knob and bell. After an instant's hesitation, I rang, and the door was opened, not by a slatternly woman in a calico wrapper and curl-papers, but by a neat girl of fourteen, dressed in a spotless, if faded, pink frock.

"Does Miss Cadbury live here?" I asked.

Her face lit up.

"I guess you mean Miss Sally," she said. "Come right in. My! she will be real pleased to have a visitor. She ain't had any for a long time."

I followed her into the diminutive front passage and up the narrow stairs. At the top, she knocked on one of the three doors opening off the landing, and, not pausing for an answer, opened it, flattening herself against the wall to let me pass.

It was a bare little room, but very cheerful, with its white curtains and gay rag-carpet, its neat bed and small table, on which were some flowers in a glass and a well-worn Bible. In a rocking-chair by the window sat Cousin Sally. She held out a welcoming hand.

"Thee will excuse my not getting up," she said apologetically.

"My rheumatism is rather bad to-day. Dear child, how glad I am to see thee!"

She seemed just the same as when I had last seen her, nearly five years before, except that the face framed by the white cap was perhaps a trifle more frail and her hands thinner; her simple gray dress and lawn kerchief were like those I had always seen her wear, and her air of gentle dignity had not changed. She was not really my cousin, but from the first I had always called her "Cousin Sally," not being able to bring myself to the bald enunciation of her Christian name, as she would have preferred.

"Bring up a chair and sit by me," she said.

I gave her the bunch of violets I had brought for her, and she held them up to her face.

"How kind of thee! I think I like violets better than any other flower. They are like a breath of spring."

"Shall I put them in water with the others?" I asked.

"I should like to hold them in my hand a little first, so as to enjoy the fragrance. Afterwards, if thee will be so good."

"Thee is probably surprised at finding me here," she said, after a short pause. I had indeed been casting about in my mind for some suitable way of satisfying my not unnatural curiosity, without appearing indelicate, and hastened to take advantage of the opening.

"Yes, I am surprised. The last time I was in Philadelphia, you were living in Arch Street."

She smiled serenely.

"It was my father's house. I should have liked to end my days there, but Providence willed otherwise. I lost my money, and had to give up the house. However, thee must not think that I am repining. I can truly say that the lines have fallen to me in pleasant places."

She looked about the poor room contentedly and sniffed at the violets in her hand.

"I am so sorry, Cousin Sally. I had not heard——"

"There is no occasion to be sorry, my dear. I realize now that it was all for the best. I have found out how much real goodness and charity there is in the world, after all. . . . Does thee remember John Stringer, the son of our old coachman?"

I searched my memory.

"The young man you took such an interest in and had sent to school?"

"Yes. Thee recollects that he got into bad company and stole some money out of my purse——"

"And you refused to have him arrested," I interrupted.

"He had been led astray by others," she said eagerly. "He was very sorry for what he had done. I felt that he ought to have another

chance. It was bread cast upon the waters—such a crumb, surely, when I think of all he has done for me! Thee may well look surprised—it is a constant source of astonishment to me. When he heard—how, I do not know—that I had lost everything, he came to me and said, ‘Miss Sally’—he will call me that, though I have tried to get him to use plain language—‘Miss Sally, I have a home, not much of a place, but there’s room in it for you, and always will be.’ I remember his very words. He told me he was a widower, and that it would be a real charity if I came. He said he would like me to train his daughter—the little girl who opened the door for thee. I did n’t want to accept—I knew he was a poor man, and I could not bear the idea of becoming a burden—but he was so anxious and persuasive, and I had nothing left and nowhere to go but the poor-house. Well, in the end, I gave in, and here I am. I have been here now for two years, and they are all so good to me.”

“How many of them are there?” I asked.

“Just John and his son and daughter.”

“And what does he do? He must be earning good wages.”

Cousin Sally blushed and plucked at her kerchief with nervous fingers.

“I wish thee had n’t asked me that. I know thee will think it strange, as thee is aware of my strong feelings against worldly pursuits, and the theatre in particular,” she said quickly.

To say that I was amazed, would but feebly express my emotion.

“Is he an actor?” I asked.

“Not quite as bad as that,” she returned deprecatingly. “No, really, that would have been too much—though I realize now that some things are not so entirely bad as I once thought them. He is—he is an acrobat.”

She brought the word out with an effort, and I felt her eyes anxiously scanning my face for some sign of disapproval.

“I did not know it until after I came here,” she continued in rapid self-justification. “I had never thought of inquiring. At first, when I did find out, I was inexpressibly shocked and pained. I had serious thoughts of going to the poor-house, after all, but on reflection I considered how grieved he would be, and how ungrateful I should appear, and I decided to remain. It was a terrible shock to me, though. Mary, the child thee saw, fell and hurt her head, and James, the boy, ran out to fetch his father. It was in the evening. I was putting a fresh compress on her head when they came in. I looked up and saw him standing there with the trappings of a Babylonitish garment about his neck——”

I could not help laughing at the reminiscent horror in her face. She smiled.

"Thee may well laugh, but at that time I knew so little of worldly things! Anyhow, I got over it: I could n't bear to hurt his feelings, but even now I think it a pity that such a really good man should not have found a worthier occupation. He does n't understand it at all, though I have often spoken to him on the subject. He says, 'Why, Miss Sally, it's the only thing I'm first rate at, and I guess if the Lord had meant me to do something different, He'd have fitted me for it.' I suppose there is something in that, and I say to myself that the ways of the Lord are mysterious and beyond human understanding——"

There was a knock at the door, and Mary looked in.

"Oh, Miss Sally, Father says he is just going to do some of his new turns, and would n't you like to see it?"

Cousin Sally turned to me in shamefaced confusion.

"I really don't know what thee will think of me, but he likes me to look on when he practises—he says it is a help. He wanted me to go to the theatre once, but when he saw how the idea shocked me, he never suggested it again. He practises in the back-yard, just under my window, so I can hardly avoid seeing, and as he thinks it a help to him——"

I hastily assured her that I thought it all eminently proper, and drew my own chair nearer the window. There he was in the tiny yard just below—a tall, slim man, arrayed in an old trunk and tights, busied with the adjustment of an improvised trapeze. The performance began—a very able one, I must say—and at the end of every turn he looked up at the window and made a sweeping gesture, one hand thrown up and out, the other on his heart, as though he acknowledged the applause of a crowded house. Extraordinary though the performance was, in those dingy surroundings, with the background of squalid houses and intricate clothes-lines, I was far more interested in Cousin Sally. With flushed face and eager eyes, she followed the acrobat's every movement, her hands clasping and unclasping in her excitement.

"I do hope he won't fall, I do hope he won't hurt himself!" she kept repeating under her breath.

He did not fall, and he did not hurt himself. It was soon over, and Cousin Sally sank back in her chair, exclaiming, "Thee must think me very strange, but I am always afraid something will happen. He laughs at me for my anxiety." Then, with a quick return of her old manner: "Still, I wish he did n't think it necessary to change his name to a foreign-sounding one—it seems to make it worse, somehow."

"What does he call himself?" I asked.

"His name is Stringer, as thee knows, but he calls himself Stringetti. He says 'Stringer' is no good in the profession."

It was so odd to hear the word from her lips that I could not repress a smile, and she laughed gently.

"Coming into it all suddenly, I can quite well understand that thee should think it curious. Sometimes I wonder what my own dear father would have said. I think I used to be narrow-minded myself, about many things, but then so much of unexpected goodness has since been revealed to me in what I should have considered impossible conditions. I don't know whether thee will be surprised when I confess that I really have come to enjoy looking on at his practising."

On my way out I met the acrobat—by this time dressed in ordinary clothes, his hair smooth and wet, as a result of generous ablutions. I offered him my hand, and he shook it heartily, but stopped me when I tried to express my recognition of his generosity.

"Not a word, ma'am, not a word. Miss Sally's welcome to anything I have, and always will be. Nobody else would ever have done for me what she did, and I don't forget it. I'm glad if she's satisfied, and I do think"—here a smile and a wink emphasized his words—"that she'd enjoy a real performance at the 'Variety,' if I could get her there unbeknownst. She lets on she's shocked, even by me, but, bless you, she ain't, not a bit of it." In which I entirely agreed.

That was the last time I saw Cousin Sally, a telegram calling me away unexpectedly the next day. The acrobat, I saw again some five months later. I happened to be in Philadelphia, and wrote to Cousin Sally, announcing myself for the following afternoon. In answer I got a letter from John Stringer, and a premonition of some disaster seized me as I tore open the envelope. The letter was a short one. I quote it verbatim:

Mrs. B.

DEAR MADAM,

I beg to inform you that our revered friend, Miss Sally, died two days ago, of her heart. It was quite peaceful. The funeral will be day after to-morrow at 2.30 P.M. sharp. I hope you will come. She would like it.

Yours truly,

JOHN STRINGER.

I went. The acrobat met me at the door, a band of black cloth on his arm. He looked tired and haggard.

"Come right in, ma'am," he said. "Ain't it a pity that it should have happened just before you come? . . . She was looking forward to seeing you again. She's laid out in the parlor—she looks beautiful."

He stopped by the parlor door, and I could see that he was longing to express his feelings, but did not know how.

"I done the best I could by her, but it wa'n't much. You see, I'm a poor man. She had all I could give her when she was alive, and now I'm going to give her a funeral she need n't be ashamed of. She was a good friend to me, and she's goin' to have a first-rate send-off," he confided in a husky whisper. "I've got the minister and the quartet from the church round the corner, and there's refreshments in the kitchen—it's all going to be A No. 1."

He led the way into the darkened parlor. The chairs were ranged stiffly round the sides, on the border of the hideous Brussels carpet, and the coffin stood on trestles in the middle of the room, with the chrysanthemums I had sent scattered over it, and a bunch of violets—Mary's offering—pressed into Cousin Sally's folded hands.

"Don't it look nice?" she asked with naïve pride.

I was standing looking down at the beautiful, calm face when I became conscious of a shuffling and the sound of much excited whispering in the passage outside. Presently, a tall man in a frock-coat—the minister, evidently—came in, followed by the acrobat and his son and daughter. We seated ourselves in silence. There was a cough outside, a clearing of throats, the sound of a tuning-fork, and four loud and aggressively cheerful voices struck up: "Oh, rest in the Lord."

Poor dear Cousin Sally—what would she have said to such a funeral!



VANQUISHED

BY ELLA WHEELER WILCOX

ONCE, suddenly, she met Death face to face—
This slender woman, to whom life was dear,
And he, the King of terrors. Near, so near
He stood like some great monster, dropped from space.
Yet in her lifted eyes there was no trace
Of anything like cowardice or fear;
And in surprise he dropped his lifted spear
And left her unmolested in her place.

Then once again she saw him. Down the years,
In hideous guise, with unrelenting mien,
The intervening space he slowly trod.
With dry, hot eyes, too terrified for tears,
She scanned the pain-paved avenues between,
Then fell to earth and shrieked, "Save, save me, God!"

THE ERROR OF HIS WAYS

By Elliott Flower

I WAS one of three in a double seat in the smoking-car. The other two, who sat opposite, were strangers to me and, apparently, to each other. At least, there was no conversation between them.

The one next to the window was a tall, thin, austere man, with carefully trimmed gray whiskers. He seemed to me uncomfortably erect and uncompromisingly unsociable. The other was shorter in stature, and rather heavy-set, with a round, smooth-shaven face that one would have thought should be radiating smiles. Apparently, however, this man had something on his mind, for he was as self-absorbed and taciturn as his seat companion.

There came then a young man who had been "celebrating" to an extent that made his condition of inebriety obvious. He was not maudlin, but he was distinctly and decidedly sociable. His mood was joyous, and he was anxious that all in the car should cheer up and be as joyous as he. He was even willing to sing for the entertainment of the crowd, and undertook to do so, but subsided cheerfully when some one growled, "Aw, dry up!"

"All right, old pal," he acquiesced. "Don't like my voice, why that's all right. Don't have to. No harm done."

He settled himself comfortably and with great deliberation in the seat beside me, and then began tugging at something in a side pocket of his coat. Presently, and after much trouble, he produced a flask that seemed to be about two sizes larger than the pocket.

"Have a drink?" he asked amiably, offering it to me.

I declined. I am no prohibitionist, but I do not care for the companionship of bibulous strangers.

He then offered the flask to the austere man on the opposite seat.

"No!" was the curt reply.

"Does he bite?" asked the bibulous one, turning to the smaller man.

The latter only smiled in an absent-minded way, and was thereupon tendered the flask.

"No, I thank you," he said courteously.

"All right, all right," acquiesced the bibulous one. "No harm

done. Guess I'm good for it all." And by way of demonstrating that he was, he took a long drink, after which he tried to draw each of us in turn into conversation.

He tried me on politics, but I do not discuss politics with intoxicated strangers. He tried the tall man on religion, but the latter refused even the courtesy of a reply. He tried the shorter one on baseball, and was somewhat more courteously treated, although the replies were those of a man whose mind was on something else.

"Oh, all right," he remarked at last, with perfect good nature. "No feller has to talk if he don't want to. Have a drink?"

Again the flask was offered to each in turn, and again it was refused in much the same way as before. Then he centred his attention on the shorter of the two opposite, apparently finding in him greater promise of sociability than in either the austere man or me.

"Don't you never drink?" he asked.

"I used to," was the reply.

"Quit?"

"Yes."

"What for?"

"I got disgusted with myself."

The inebriated one wagged his head solemnly. "Sure," he said; "we all do. How long ago was that?"

"A good many years. I don't remember just how many."

"And you stuck to it?"

"Yes."

"Never broke over once?"

"No."

"Thunder! I'm always breakin' over. How'd you do it?"

The short man, while answering courteously, had seemed rather anxious to discourage conversation, but now he spoke with more animation. "Well," he said, "my father here," and he indicated the austere man, who thereupon stiffened as if some one had unexpectedly poked him in the ribs, "is mainly responsible for it. He showed me the errors of my ways, and he has been a tower of strength. He travels with me most of the time."

The austere man glared at him, but said nothing.

"That helps," commented the bibulous one. "I'd run pretty straight myself if the old man travelled with me. On the road much?"

"Almost continuously."

"What line?"

"The good of mankind."

"What!"

"I'm an evangelist."

The inebriated one was surprised. So was I. Then I thought I

detected a wink that seemed to say, "I guess that will stop him." It did—for a few minutes. He was quite overwhelmed, but he recovered sufficiently to ask the "evangelist" his name.

"Billy Sunday," was the prompt reply.

I smiled. I had never seen Billy Sunday, and for all I knew this might be the man, but it looked to me like a huge joke.

The eyes of the bibulous one opened wide. An ordinary evangelist might not interest him, but Billy Sunday was evidently another proposition. He offered his hand impulsively. "Put it there, Billy!" he exclaimed. "I've seen you play ball."

"Billy" looked to me like a man who was somewhat discouraged by the turn of affairs, but he shook the proffered hand.

"You were certainly a great ball-player," declared the affable imbibor.

"I hope," was the modest reply, "that I am a better evangelist."

I smiled again. He did it very well.

"If you are," asserted his admirer, "you're a corker."

A discussion of baseball followed, in which "Billy" took only a minor and reluctant part. He said he had given little attention to the subject since he had quit the diamond. I gathered, too, that the announcement of his identity had not had the effect that he anticipated, and that he regretted making it.

The situation was doubly amusing to me. I was in a position to appreciate "Billy's" joke, and I could also see wherein the joke was on "Billy." He carried it off well, but he had brought upon himself in extra measure the boredom that he sought to escape.

Then, suddenly, his whole manner changed. He seemed to awaken to the opportunity that lay before him, and he put aside whatever was on his mind. His eyes brightened, his voice had a new ring to it.

"Why do you drink?" he asked incisively.

"Me!" exclaimed the mellow one, startled. "Why—why, because I want to."

"Why do you want to?" The question, while sharp and quick, was not without a suggestion of sympathetic understanding.

"Oh, just for a good time."

"Costly time usually, isn't it?"

"Well, a fellow's got to have some fun," parried the now uncomfortable man.

"But is it fun?" persisted "Billy," and I nodded my approbation of the thoroughness and perfection of his pose.

"Why—why, sure, it's fun at the time," was the halting reply.

"And afterward?"

But the victim rebelled. "Now, look here, Billy," he exclaimed, "you can't sign me up on no prohibition team."

"My boy," returned "Billy" conciliatorily, "I only want to talk the matter over with you. I want to get your point of view. The better I understand these things, the more effective I shall be in my work." Oh, he did it marvellously well! "I am studying all the time—conditions, ideals, temperaments. To accomplish anything, an evangelist must be a close and persistent student of human nature. What's your name?"

The question was shot out so suddenly that the reply was instinctive and involuntary: "Tom Bigby."

"All right, Tom. Are you married?"

"Yes."

"Any children?"

"Yes, one boy."

"Are you doing right by him?"

"Oh, he don't know."

"Can you keep this sort of thing from him—forever?"

"Now, look here, Billy," expostulated Tom, "you got me sized up wrong. I'm straight as a string at home. Everybody thinks I'm just about right."

"Does your wife?"

My admiration for "Billy" was profound. He certainly was having sweet revenge for the annoyance to which he had been subjected, and I was satisfied that it would be a long time before Tom forced his society upon anybody else. He was squirming uneasily now.

"Oh, she don't mind," he said at last. "She knows I got to slip away once in a while and blow off steam, and she lets it go at that."

"Because she can't help it, perhaps," suggested "Billy." "But is it fair to her? Aside from the moral question, can you afford it? Is there no way that you could spend the money to better advantage? Have you so much that this is n't missed? Has she an equal sum to spend for her own pleasure?"

"A woman don't need so much money as a man," argued Tom.

"Why, Tom," insisted "Billy," "she needs more. There are thousands of little luxuries that women prize—harmless ones, too—little matters of dress and entertainment and home comfort and beautification—little luxuries for the children. Does your wife have to forego none of these to pay for your personal indulgence? Is she as well-dressed as she could and should be? Has your boy everything that you would like him to have? Is your home all that you could make it?"

I began to have doubts as to "Billy's" real character. Perhaps this was not a joke, after all. He spoke with the earnestness of conviction. And yet, if what he said were true, it was difficult to explain the aloofness of the austere man. It was evident, however, that Tom had none of these doubts.

"Say, Billy," he admitted penitently, "it don't look just fair when you put it that way."

"It's not fair," returned "Billy" emphatically, "and your wife and boy will realize it in time, if they don't now. Then how will you stand with them?"

"But I can't quit, Billy," whined Tom. "I got to break loose once in a while. It ain't a reg'lar thing, you know, but I can't seem to help it now and then."

"Can't!" repeated "Billy" scornfully. "Can't! If you knew you'd lose a finger every time you took a drink, would you take one?"

"Why—why, no."

"Then, you can let it alone?"

"Ye-es, in a case like that."

"How about losing a wife and boy?" demanded "Billy" sharply.

Tom was sorely troubled. "Billy," he said at last, "I believe I'll quit—really and truly quit this time. You make me see it all different."

"Billy," in his earnestness, leaned forward and told something of his own experiences—at least, he said they were his own experiences, and he told them in a most effective way. I was greatly impressed, and even the austere man began to relax.

"But it is not enough to *believe* you will quit," he concluded; "you must *know* it."

"I do know it," declared Tom, almost tearfully penitent. "I've been a weak fool and a brute."

"You have," was the reply. "Give me your flask."

"What are you going to do with it?"

"Throw it out the window."

I was convinced now that "Billy" was all that he pretended to be, and yet—

The flask went out the window, but it seemed to me that "Billy" wavered a moment after he got it in his possession, and that it required an effort of will for him to part from it in this way. Still, it went out the window, and that was surely convincing. "Billy" was not perpetrating a joke; he was sincere.

"I congratulate you, Tom," he said. "You've done a bigger and better thing to-day than you ever before did in your life. Remember that whenever you are tempted! Think a little—of your wife, your boy, your home, your business! There will always be strength in that."

Tom left us at the next station, tearfully asserting that "Billy" had made a man of him, and the austere man then woke up.

"Sir," he said, "you took an unwarranted liberty in your reference to me!"

"But in a good cause," returned "Billy" cheerfully. "See what I did for that young fellow! And note my own self-denial! I threw that bottle away when I was actually dying for a drink. Had to do it, you know. Got started and had to play the game out. But it was pretty tough. Have n't got a flask about you, have you?"

"I have not," was the emphatic reply.

"How about you?"—and "Billy" turned to me.

I laughed and reached for my suit-case. "You ought to be on the stage," I remarked.

"Yes?" he returned interrogatively.

"You did it well," I assured him. "You fooled me completely, although I was skeptical at first. I scoffed, doubted, became convinced, and now——"

"Yes?" he repeated in the same tone.

"Well, let us hope that you did some good, any way," I said, "even if your original intent was only to badger him."

"Let us hope so," he agreed.

I passed him my flask, after unscrewing the top. He smiled at the austere man, whose disapprobation was evident, and then bowed gravely to me. "I have been somewhat overwhelmed by my own eloquence," he remarked. "If you don't mind, I believe I'll send this after the other." And the flask went out the window.

I did n't mind; I had been considerably impressed by his argument myself; but I was puzzled. I am still puzzled. I don't know what to make of "Billy," and I wish I did. Perhaps the joke is also on me.

CYNICISMS

EXPERIENCE is the acid-test of advice.

MANY a man has written a best-seller before he thought.

ARISTOCRACY is an acquired taste. All children are democratic.

ONE can usually recognize an old family by the decay of its branches.

IN the eyes of a traction magnate, the millennium is that blissful state where nickels can be collected for no service whatsoever.

"UNTIL a man finds a wife he is only a half," says the Sanskrit; but it does n't follow that a man can become the whole thing by getting married.

Ellis O. Jones

THE DECENT THING

By Owen Oliver

Author of "The School-Mother," "Out of Bounds," etc.

THE Dad does n't preach often. So I expect to find something in it when he does. I always remember what he said as the train was starting off, the first time I went away to school. I felt a bit choky, I recollect, when I grabbed his hand through the window.

"You'll find, old chap, that it generally pays to do the decent thing," he told me.

I believe he was right. It always works well, if I manage to do it.

I thought of it yesterday, when my sisters were talking to me. I'm going back to school to-morrow (my first term in the Upper), and they gave me a swagger writing-case—real leather, with a regular whiff, and fitted up with everything a chap wants; and I asked the girls why they'd spent so much money on me.

"Because you're a good sport," Maud said, "and don't lose your temper when we rag you."

"And won't be ragged out of your own opinion," Bess said.

"Oh, rot!" I told them. "You girls are too decent to get mad with. Thanks awfully!"

There was n't anything to get mad about, really. They only chaffed me for sending so many picture post-cards to Nora Webster, and getting them from her, and because I went to stay for a few days with the Masons. He's the head of our school, and Mrs. Mason is his wife, and Nora is her sister. When the girls tried to torment me I only laughed up my sleeve. I know I'll have the best of it when they see what a jolly girl I've got; and it was only through doing the decent thing, and not being ragged off it, that I got her. My word, that *was* a rag! I'll tell you about it.

All the fellows at the school went crazy over Nora when she came to live with her sister. We soon got to know her, because Mrs. Mason is n't the sort to say that girls should n't know boys. She is young for a head's wife, and a ripper to look at, and never puts on side, and we think an awful lot of her. She's won no end

of prizes at tennis, and a medal for life-saving. She jumped off a pier to pick up a kid who fell in the sea. (Silly little ass!) She says she did n't deserve a medal, because she can swim like a fish. I dare say she can; but Nora showed me the account in a paper, and it said the sea was very rough, and she could n't swim properly in her clothes, and was nearly drowned herself; and they don't give silver medals for nothing. Anyhow, she's all right; but the story is n't about her.

Nora was even better-looking than her sister, but she fancied herself a lot more, and seemed to think a girl of fourteen was too old for Middle School chaps. She did n't take much notice of the fellows in the Upper School either, if you come to that. So I did n't think there was any chance for me. I'm just an ordinary sort of rotter, except that I'm pretty fair at sports and games; but I never came off in them when she was looking on. The very first time she watched us I muffed an easy catch, right in front of her. I heard her say, "Butter-fingers!" And I heard Mrs. Mason whisper, "Hush, Nora!" And then she said, quite loudly for her, "Eastlake misses as few as anybody." You can see from that why we like her.

I had rough luck in the boxing competition, too. Every one knew the Middle School championship lay between Donovan and me, though we drew together in the first round. I dare say he'd have licked me anyhow, but I had a sprained wrist, or he'd have had a harder job. He knew that, and said so; and Mrs. Mason said, "You made the *pluckiest* fight, under your disadvantage, Eastlake!" But Nora stuck her head up as usual, and did n't say a word. Naturally, she thought I was a duffer to go out in the first round. So I did n't blame her; but I would n't give her the chance of snubbing me, by trying to talk to her, but just said, "Thank you, Mrs. Mason. I think he'd win any time, you know. He's awfully hot stuff;" and then I walked off.

I thought I'd show her—Nora, I mean—that I was good at "gym" anyhow. I practised like fury, and the instructor said I was safe to win; but I had 'flu, and they sent me to the infirmary the day before the competition. Mrs. Mason brought me things and read to me, and gave me a silver pencil-case. She said it was "a prize for bearing bad luck like a man." The first half-holiday that I was out she took me in a motor, and taught me to drive. She took Nora, too; but she (Nora, not Mrs. Mason,) stuck her nose up more than ever. So I did n't talk to her, except just to be civil. She says now that she was a pig because I was a pig, and she *did n't* sniff when Mrs. Mason spoke about my hard luck.

The evening after that the chaps had a paper-chase. Old Thomson—he's the vice captain of the school—said I was n't fit yet and

The Decent Thing

must n't go in. So I felt jolly sick of everything, and went off for a walk in the country. It's funny how things happen, because if I had n't I should n't have been sending picture post-cards to Nora now, or getting them from her.

I went along the High Street, and out into the main road, and turned off into Green Lane. When I'd gone about a mile down it, I heard a motor coming toward me, hooting like mad, and then I heard a shout and a scream that made my blood turn cold. I knew in a minute that they'd gone over a lady; and when I'd run to the place they were putting her in the car to take her to the hospital. She had very light hair and a blue hat; and the funny thing was that a handkerchief was tied round her eyes. One of the gentlemen with the car asked me to notice that, and took my name and address.

"If she's killed," he declared, "it's suicide. Do you know anything about her?"

I said I'd seen her in the town, and I thought her name was Smith, or Brown, or something like that. I told them where the hospital was, and they went off. They offered to take me, but I knew they'd put me in with the suicide, and I did n't care about it.

I walked on feeling a bit queer, because she looked rather nice, and something like my Aunt Kate; and in a minute I heard two kids calling from the bushes.

"Mummy, Mummy!" they both said; and one yelled out: "We's here, Mummy! You'll never find us!"

I guessed in a second that they belonged to the lady, and she had n't suicided, but had been blindfolded while the kids hid, and had stepped off the path into the road without noticing. It was just round a corner, and the motor chaps would n't see her in time. I don't think it was their fault, and nobody ever said it was.

I thought at first I'd run on to a cottage, and tell a woman to look after the brats; but I did n't remember any cottage near, and I did n't see any woman. So I decided to tell them to go back to their place.

"Hi, you kids!" I bawled. "Mummy's gone home. You'd better run after her."

They came out of the bushes and stared at me. They were nice, fat little girls, with light hair and blue eyes and blue sashes. They were n't old enough to talk plainly.

"Mummy tum back nex' presently," the biggest said. "Silly boy!" She was about five, and as chubby as anything, and not a bit afraid of me.

"Silly boy!" the littlest repeated, and shook her hair and laughed like anything. She was about four.

"You play," the first one said. "Bind hankshief you'self."

They trotted up and grabbed hold of me. One crawled through my legs, and the other felt in my pockets for a handkerchief, and seemed to think it fine fun. I dare say it was for them; but it was n't for me. I could n't leave two fat little babies to scream themselves into fits; and if I took them with me I was pretty sure to meet some of our chaps; and then I'd be called "nursie" or "auntie" or "granny," or something of the sort, for the rest of my days. Fellows always pretend that they don't like youngsters, though most of them do.

"Here's a pretty go!" I muttered; and the two kids nodded at me like two little owls.

"Ess," the biggest one said. "Pitty girl!"

"Pitty dirl, too," the other told me.

I could n't help laughing. I believe girls are born vain. But they *were* pretty kids.

They'd found some candy in my pockets, and they shared it out and began sucking it.

"Nice boy!" one said; and the other said, "Ess!" and something that sounded like Dutch, and wiped her sticky hands on me!

"What's your name?" I asked the biggest.

"Daddy's lamb," she said. I can't make out why people always give their kids ridiculous names.

"Me Mummy's picshure," the littlest one told me.

"Umph!" I grunted. "Come along, Lamb and Picture. We'll go home, and find Mummy and Daddy."

"Ess!" they both agreed, and tucked their messy little hands into mine, and trotted along, one on each side, jabbering like two little parrots. One showed me her "noo soos," and the other her "booful boo sas'," ("sash," she meant), and they sang and said nursery rhymes, and seemed quite bucked up for a time. Then they began to get tired, and to say, "Want Mummy." I said we'd run and catch her, and hauled them along as fast as I could. They liked that and screamed with laughter till Picture tripped and kicked her own shin. She howled about it like blazes, and I had to kiss the place, and bind it up with my handkerchief; and after that I had to let her kiss me. That's the worst of kids. They will slobber you about. But they were nice little beggars, and a chap could n't help liking them.

We did n't run any more, and I could n't get them to walk very fast. They stopped to pick flowers and to look at everything. Lamb ran back after a butterfly, and I had to chase her. Picture wept because I went, and I had to let her kiss me again. Then Lamb said, "Dood girl now. Kiss Lamb, too!" So I had to kiss *her*. There was no one to see, thank goodness!

We met a woman near the end of the lane. I was going to offer her seven pence halfpenny—it was all I had—to take them home; but

when I asked the kids if they'd go with her they held on to my legs and began to snivel; and Lamb said, "Me wants *you*"; and Picture said, "Me, too!"

I felt awfully mad, because I knew I might meet our chaps anywhere in the main road; but I did n't want the kids to cry; and I thought they'd got enough to cry for, if they knew. So I promised to take them myself. There was a tuck-stall at the end of the lane, and I bought them a great sugar-stick apiece, and made the woman wrap paper round one end, like the Mater used to, when I was a brat.

I looked up and down the road, and did n't see any of our chaps. So I thought I might dodge them, after all, and hurried the kids along, till Picture tried to swallow some of the paper and nearly choked. I had to stop and fish it out. It made me beastly sticky, and the youngsters pawed me all over; and I had to hold their messy hands and pull them along. We met some country louts and they called me "daddy," and asked me where "the missus" was; and all the people ran out to their doors to stare at us. I've felt a fool before—and since—but not so bad!

I hoped I'd meet some one who knew the kids, and would take charge of them, when we reached the High Street; but I did n't. Nobody seemed to know where they lived, and Picture commenced to weep. "Picshure tired," she wailed. "Want cally! Nice boy! *P'ease!*" So I took her up and carried her. Then Lamb wanted to be carried too. That was too much for me. I had n't got over the 'flu properly, and I was as weak as a rat, and about done up already, and though they were n't big, they were fat and heavy. So I said we'd play horses instead, and held the ends of Lamb's sash for reins, and Picture bucked up and shouted "Gee! Gee!" and made everybody roar at us. Presently Lamb found a switch in the road, and made me the horse, and held the tails of my jacket and whacked me! Picture crumpled my collar, and messed my face with her sticky hands—and her sticky mouth sometimes, poor little beggar!—and took my cap off and ruffled my hair, and stroked me with her dirty hands. I was warm, and the perspiration made me look worse. I felt a bit queer too, and Picture seemed to weigh about a ton. I expect it was through the 'flu, because I could carry a kid like that easily at ordinary times.

Most of the people only grinned, and some old ladies said complimentary things; but some said things that weren't at all complimentary. The errand boy at Jones the greengrocer's, said most; but he did n't say much when I caught him three days after. (I spent a half-holiday looking for him.) However, I did n't care much, so long as I did n't meet any one from the school. I'd got half way through the High Street, and had n't, and was beginning to

chortle; and then about forty of our chaps, coming back from the paper chase, rushed out of a side street; and when they yelled another forty came out of Evanson's, the confectioner's, and the whole lot started ragging me.

If I'd managed to explain to them, I don't suppose they'd have ragged so much, because they're not cads, and, whatever they might say, they would n't have left two tiny kids, who'd lost their mother, any more than I would. But they did n't give me a chance to tell them, and shouted and laughed and tried to be funny. I dare say some of them would have listened if I'd called to them by name, but I got mad and had one of my obstinate fits, and made up my mind that they could think what they pleased; and I would n't explain, or put Picture down, but just take the kids home. So I went on, with one in my arms, and one at my tail; but I felt frightful. It must have been the 'flu, because I can stand ragging as a rule, and Picture was n't really heavy.

The fellows did n't interfere with me, of course; but they sniggered and jeered, and made as if they were wheeling prams, and called me "Pa," and asked how "Ma" was, and pretended to carry babies and make them cry. The kids got frightened at the row, and Picture hung round my neck, and I lost my cap, and did n't think to pick it up. (Rance put it in his pocket and gave it to me afterwards. That shows they did n't mean to be caddish.) Lamb clung on to my leg and made it hard to walk; and I put my arm round her, because she was frightened and had n't any mother. At least, I thought she had n't. I felt so bad that I thought I could n't feel worse; and then I saw Nora walking down the street toward us! And I knew that I could!

She was dressed in white, and looked just as clean and fresh and smart as I was n't. Mrs. Mason dresses her awfully well, and her looks show off the things, of course. She had her nose up in the air, as usual—but don't tell her I said that—and seemed to look over my head. I don't know if you ever felt a regular worm. That's how I felt. But I was n't going to show it, so I stuck my nose up, too!

The fellows rushed up to her—those who knew her and had cheek—and pointed to me, and all jabbered at once. She did n't say a word, but walked straight on; and just as she got to me, Matthews said, "What do you think of Eastlake for a nurse?" And then she turned on him and seemed to *blaze*. I never saw any one look so furious!

"I think," she said—she has a very clear voice, like her sister—"if I were in trouble, I should be very glad to have a friend like Eastlake; or—or if I was n't! You—you unspeakable cads!"

They stopped their ragging and looked regular idiots. She did n't say another word to them, but stooped down to Lamb.

"Let me carry you, darling," she said, and picked her up; but Lamb held out her arms to me.

"Want nice boy," she said.

"We're going with the nice boy, dear," Nora told her. "He's too tired to carry you, too."

"I can manage her," I offered. "She's frightfully messy, and she'll sticky you."

Nora gave me a funny look.

"You know you're too done up to carry her," she said. "You've been ill, and—why do you want to?"

"I thought I'd do the decent thing," I said.

She gave me another look.

"I think I will, too," she said; and marched on with her head higher than ever; and Lamb pulled her hat about and tugged at her hair, and stroked her face with her sticky hands; and she was as sweet as candy to her, even when the little wretch blew in her ear, and made her jump.

The chaps did n't follow us, and Picture went to sleep. I began to tell Nora about it, but I had n't much breath, and she stopped me as soon as I'd mentioned the accident and finding the kids.

"Tell me afterwards," she said. "You're too done up to talk. I wish you'd let me carry her too."

"You're a good little sort," I said.

"No, I'm not," she contradicted. "I'm a nasty, disagreeable little sort. You'll soon see, when you know me better."

We got to the corner of Hospital Road; and there we met the motor coming back with another gentleman in it, and Lamb yelled out, "Daddy! Daddy!" It was their father coming to look for them. He was nearly wild with excitement, and rushed at them as if he'd eat them. His wife was only stunned, he said, but she was nearly off her head about the children, because she thought they were lost, and he had n't known they were n't at home till she came to and asked about them. He said a lot of nice things, and told me I'd hear from him again (and I did). Then he took the kids off—I had to let them kiss me again!—and I was left with Nora.

"Thanks awfully," I said. "It was frightfully decent of you. Good-by."

"Are n't you going back to the school?" she asked.

"Ye-es," I said, "but—I'm beastly untidy, and—I'd jolly well like to go with you, but it would be a bit awkward for you to walk with—with a chap who looks like a tramp; and, besides, the chaps will—jolly me, you know."

She looked at me in that steady way that Mrs. Mason and she can look.

"You like to do 'the decent thing,'" she said; "*and so do I!* If you were as black as a chimney-sweep, and the whole school was waiting to rag you, I'd come with you. So there!"

They did n't rag me any more, as it happened. Some of the chaps had heard about the motor accident in the town, and that I'd taken the kids home; and the fellows who'd ragged me were sorry when they knew about it. The whole school was waiting at the gates, and Benson—he's the captain of the school—came up and shook hands.

"You're a good sport, Eastlake," he said; "and I'm glad you've taken a prize at last!" He grinned at Nora, and she stuck up her head a little bit higher; but she went pretty red, and I thought I'd help her out.

"If I have," I said, "it's the best prize the school's ever given!"

"Did you mean it," Nora asked me, when we got off from the chaps, "or did you only say it because—because it was the decent thing?"

"I meant it," I told her. "I—I'd like to be chums with you."

"All right," she agreed; and she's been my chum ever since; and that shows how it pays to do the decent thing!



LINCOLN'S BIRTHDAY

BY JOHN KENDRICK BANGS

A SACRED day is this—
A day to bless;
A day that leads to bliss
Through bitterness.
For on this day of days,
One wondrous morn,
In far off forest ways
Was Lincoln born!

Who supped the cup of tears,
Who ate the bread
Of sorrow and of fears,
Of war and dread;
Yet from this feast of woes,
His people's pride,
A loved immortal rose
All glorified!

ON BEING BORED

By Thomas L. Masson

A GREAT many people think that riches are desirable, and work very hard to get them. Others attempt independence in divers ways—as in the professions, where one is assured of a certain prestige, and a certain kind of permanence of occupation.

But the real object which we all have in mind, underneath the surface, is to avoid being bored.

It would not be so hard to come down from the station we are in at present, to one lower in the scale—a thing which we usually dread to contemplate—if we could be assured that we would not be bored. But we are pretty well aware that those things which we have surmounted, have outgrown, so to speak, would not be interesting to us if we had to return to them. We therefore shrink even from the thought, and use our best endeavors to avoid being placed in such a predicament.

Almost anything is better than being bored. To prove this, we have only to reflect upon the dangers with which people put up, upon the adventures and privations which they voluntarily undergo, to avoid this calamity. Why did Mr. Roosevelt go to Africa? Because things at home were too tame for him. He readily took the chances of being eaten alive, or stung out of his mind by gnats, or of living for days on short rations, or, in fact, being subjected to any physical inconvenience, rather than be bored.

One of the chief dangers we have to contend with is, being bored by ourselves. We can, by strategy or experience, usually get rid of others. But we are always confronted by ourselves. There we are, obtruding, breaking in upon ourselves, just at the wrong moment.

Think of the countless times we have had to stop and listen to our own petty troubles! Think of the wakeful and unprofitable hours we have passed in our own company!

To avoid this, we are constantly taking all sorts of gambling risks. We accept an invitation to dinner, without knowing beforehand whom we shall sit next to. We acquire the habit of making money, without a realization of the insufferable company it will bring us into; and all this, to avoid being with ourselves overmuch.

What every man ought to do is to take himself in hand as early

as possible and make himself companionable. Let him consider frankly what he can do with himself.

The task is by no means an easy one. If any one thinks it is, let him look around, and see how few people there are, among all those whom he knows, who dare to stay alone with themselves for any length of time. Let him consider how they are continually fighting against this possibility, and paying out large sums to forestall it.

What a shrinkage in values there would be, if all those who cater to the restless people who are afraid to be alone with themselves should suddenly go out of business.

Europe would go into the hands of a receiver. Exciting novels would be stacked up on the shelves. No curtains would ring up. Banquet halls would remain empty. Newspapers would melt away. Controversies would vanish. Fads would evaporate.

That is why vice is more attractive than virtue; not because it is immoral, but because there is more variety to it. We can keep at it longer without being bored.

That is why this little piece will not be acceptable to the majority of men; because, as they read it, they will realize that they are doing so because during this moment they have tried to get away from themselves, and it will irritate them to think that the writer has taken advantage of them to point out one of their fundamental defects, when they rather expected that he would amuse them.



"THAT FAR-OFF LITTLE TOWN"

BY MAHLON LEONARD FISHER

I THINK God made that far-off little Town
 From some sweet scrap of woodland He had left;
 I think He traced its lanes with fingers deft,
 And bade the skies above it never frown.
 I think He wrought those houses, white and brown,
 From some rare fabric like the Golden Fleece;
 I *know* He named their watchwords LOVE and PEACE,
 And set the stars high over for a crown.

I know He guards it night and day whilst I
 Seek phantom treasure at the rainbow's end,
 Blessed beyond cavil if the twilight lend
 Or sight or sound which Love will not let die.—
 Now lilacs purple all the dusk, and, hark!
 A robin sings defiance to the Dark.

THE SUPER WHO STAYED BOSS

By Courtenay De Kalb

"I T'S all a matter of real red blood and the Texas hoss sense in a man," remarked Michael Flynn, as he pushed back his broad-brimmed gray hat, and smiled a silvery smile at the group gathered about the table.

"You haven't been operating mines on your own account long enough to get rid of the ideas of——"

"Of the bunk-house—spit it out!" ejaculated Michael.

"Well, then, of the bunk-house," said Mr. Farnsworth. "You have n't felt the Western Federation of Miners grind *you* yet, so as to knock those ideas out of your head."

"Now, look 'e here," said Michael; "that super of your'n jumped as if a rattler had buzzed at his feet just as soon as them fellers come inter his office. He bellered at 'em like a mad bull, an' threatened to kick 'em out, an' swore up an' down as how *he* were a-runnin' of thet mine. Lord, man, that ain't no way to git ter wind'ard of a lot of rough miners. They ain't no show of bravery in thet kin' o' rantin'."

"But he's standing by his post when the Union's making it so hot for him that——"

"Thet he's a-trimblin' in his boots, and don't dare to stick his nose outen the office-door, 'ceptin' he's got two Pinkerton guards on each side of 'im," said Michael.

"What would *you* do, then?" asked another of the group.

"Play fair and play strong," said Michael. "Let me tell you a story," continued the energetic, blue-eyed Irishman. "Here's how another super I onc't knowed played a game, an' got there, too. It jist shows the diff'rence 'tween two ways o' goin' at it. Jim Fox come out from New Yo'k to take charge of the War Whoop mine, twenty-stamp mill, free-millin', an' a danged tough job it were, too. Sich an old rattle-trap of a mill, and a buckin' gas'leen h'ist that were enough to wear the patience outen a mule. An' he hed a tough gang, ef I do say it myself, as were one of 'em, workin' for him. The boys had it all their own way with the supers afore his time, an' they ain't

no doubt it run up the costs ungodly high. We knowed it, but then, ye see, a lot o' fellers like that ain't no better 'n boys: they don't mean to do no harm at first, but ef the master can't rule the school, the school plays ball with the master, that's all. It's jist a question of who's boss, an' the best man wins. Don't yer fergit it: the fust an' most important thing is to git a super as can make his men respect 'im. Well, Jim Fox did it. When he fust come his sweet, mild-mannered ways made the boys smile. 'He's easy,' they said; an' the way things bucked about that mine were a caution. The ore-bins was empty at the end o' day-shift when they'd oughter been full; the cars was off the track half the time in the levels; the pumps was out o' whack in the mill, an' the 'malgamator a-cussin' 'cause they wa'n't no water, an' next thing he was cussin' 'cause 't were muddy an' chokin' the screens, an' gummin' up the plates. 'T war enough to make a man sick, an' Jim Fox were 'bout distracted. I was sorry for 'im, an' yit—well, I kind o' wondered whether he had the grit to pull through. He knowed his business, though, Jim did. He jist worked quietly, never cussin', never sayin' much, an' never showin' irritation. But he kep' them mechanics on the run, firin' 'em an' gittin' new ones, an' he did git that blamed old mill licked inter shape so as to make a better showin' than any one else had ever done. He knowed a stamp-mill, an' he knowed a concentrator. His touch was kind o' like magic, an' that made the mill-crew respect 'im, till they fin'ly begun ter take pride in the work.

"But the miners were still contrary, an' the mix-up underground were enough to break a man's heart. Jim kep' his eyes open, an' give a lot o' the worst of 'em their time. Then the trouble began. Them as he'd fired talked 'bout the rights o' the Union to say who should be sent on the run, an' the end o' it were thet a committee were app'inted to wait on him with an ultimatum.

"Jim listened to 'em in his quiet way, sayin' nothin'. When they got through he says, 'You run the Union, an' I'll run the mine. Jist give me good men as knows how ter work an' is willin' ter work, an' I don't want nothin' better 'n to hire my force through you, same as ef you was an employment agency,' says he. An' then he called for his Chiny cook an' had the Scotch passed 'roun', an' the committee walked out kind o' sheepish, not knowin' what ter say.

"But some o' the big-mouths war n't satisfied, an' they kep' a-agitatin', an' the trouble kep' a-brewin' till it war certain that a strike war about on. 'He's jist a-playin' on you with his soft tricks,' said the blow-hards. 'He ain't got no sand. Put it to 'im hard. Make a demand for fifty cents extry for raisin' an' sinkin', with recognition of the Union,' says they. 'See what he'll do when it comes ter a show-down.'

"There were dynamite in the air for sure. Jim held conferences with his neighbors across the valley on Soledad, but we knowed the weather over there. One mine were jist a-crawlin' along, tryin' ter git out a few bars each month so's to help the home office to sell stock an' git cash to finish payin' for the mine an' mill; they dassen't shut down, for it'd be their las' act ef they did. The other mine were under option to a Colorado syndicate, an' a strike would kill their sale. They'd make love to the Union if necessary, rather 'n git into a labor scrape. The men knowed them things, an' they passed around the ha-ha when they seed Jim ride over through the grease-wood to call on them weak-kneed supers on Soledad.

"Jim had some notions as had n't wore off yit, sech as cleanin' up the camp, stoppin' drunks, an' prohibitin' shootin' within camp limits, all good enough in their way, but they made the boys laugh. It kind o' made him seem soft, you see, an' they had n't seed the iron in his compersation yit. You've got ter show thet 'fore you wins respect, you know. But he showed it, an' this were the way of it.

"He'd fired an engineer, an ornery cuss that slobbered terbaccer juice, an' lazied roun'. Nobody cared when he went. Jim brings up another from Los Angeles, a tall chap with fine airs, an' chief marine engineer's papers with gold seals on 'em. He hed a fam'ly, too, wife an' darter, rather neat an' nice, an' the boys was some impressed.

"All went well for a few days. Then one evenin' the mill-engine stopped, an' Jim went up to see about it. The gov'nor were out of order, an' Con Rayburn, the engineer, were potterin' 'roun' tryin' ter fix it, an' not gettin' it fixed very fast. Jim walks up, slacks off a set screw, adjusts the dash-pot, tightens her up, lays hold of the throttle-valve, calls out, 'Throw her off centre, there,' as he turns on the steam, an' away she goes. He says nothin', but makes a memorandum in his little red book, and walks back to the office, but the men took note of the easy way he straightened that little matter out. 'Bout ten o'clock down went the mill all of a sudden, 'fore the battery-man could hang up a single stamp. Jim was on the spot in less'n five minutes. 'What's the matter now?' he asks in his quiet way.

"'The b'iler's a-foamin',' says Con.

"'What you bin puttin' in it?' asks Jim.

"'Nothin',' says Con.

"Jim looks 'roun' a bit, orders fire under the spare b'iler, an' when the gauge shows ninety pounds he cuts that b'iler in, makes some more notes in his red book, an' as he walks away he says to Con, 'Don't put any more oil in the b'iler. Use your compound.' An' the men laughs, an' Con looks mad as thunder.

"It were 'bout two o'clock that mornin' when flunk went the mill agin. In ten minutes there comes Jim. 'T were a way he hed. He

were allus on duty; ef anything went wrong, day or night, there come Jim with his little red book, goin' right to the seat of trouble, makin' notes, an' fixin' things up. When he walks into the engine-room, there was Con tryin' to uncramp the valve gear of that old Corliss, usin' a crowbar. 'T war like tryin' to fix a Elgin watch with a blacksmith's kit. The way Jim jumped for thet bar was like a tiger springin' on his prey. He flung the bar into a corner, breshed Con away, slacked off the nuts, loosened things up, and, after overhaulin' the engine a bit, he turns on the steam an' the fly-wheel started.

"Then Jim turns to Con. 'If I were you, I'd know what to do to-morrow after this shift,' says he.

"'What d'ye mean?' shouted Con.

"'Chief marine engineer's papers ain't what counts out here on the desert,' says Jim dryly.

"An' with that Con grabs the crowbar an' makes for 'im. But he stopped short, for he was lookin' straight into Jim's revolver, and Jim's eyes behind it was flashin' fire. Then in a sweet, sarcastic manner Jim says, 'Put down thet plaything,' an' Con drops the bar. 'Now put on your coat an' git your dinner-pail,' says Jim, meanwhile keepin' him covered with the gun. Then he marches him out to the battery room an' beckons to Douglas. 'Take the engine to-night, Douglas,' says Jim. 'I've got ter escort this gentleman home lest he run amuck;' an' he were a-smilin' in a cool, nasty way as must 'a' galled Con worse'n to have the gun p'inted at him.

"That ended the performance that night. The story ran through the camp, an' 'pinions was divided. The idee of flashin' a gun ain't ter the likin' o' men, you know. So there was mutterin' and black looks, an' the big-mouths was fer callin' the strike right away.

"Trouble fer Jim were in the air, an' everybody jist waited ter see what'd happen. Well, 'long 'bout half-past four, or mebbe quarter ter five, jist at shift-changin' time, when the day-shift were comin' outen the mine, and the night-shift were hangin' 'roun' the porch o' the boardin' house after breakfast or supper, whichever ye choose ter call it—just at the time w'en every one could see—out comes Con from his doorway, an', standin' there on his porch, he begins to shoot at a Joshua tree on the hillside. 'T wa'n't doin' no particular harm—he war n't shootin' up the town, you see—but 't were agin orders, and the case of who were ter be boss in that camp were bein' tried. Jedge an' jury was the men, all in one, an' when Con started that prank I can tell ye the sympathy, jist because of the spirit of deviltry in the boys, was all on the side o' Con. Jim knowed it, too. The time had come to rule or resign. .

"Fust Jim sent his book-keeper across the gulch to tell Con that he were breakin' a regulation. Con sent back some cuss words, and said

that if Jim came over to enforce his fool regulation he'd fill him up with lead. Of course that was what everybody 'spected. The supreme moment had come. Jim walked out of the office, his right hand in his right coat-pocket. We knowed what was there—could see the shape o' the gun in his pocket. Jim was looking kind o' keerless, half-smilin', but Lordy, them eyes! He jist swept the crowd o' men on the porch with a glance as he passed, an' we felt as ef a hot wind hed teched us. We knowed then who were goin' ter be master in thet camp. Well, Jim Fox just strolled leisurely over them bleachin' sands ez if he were a-lookin' fer flowers fer his sweetheart. He walked straight toward Con's little cottage, sayin' nothin', while Con waved his gun in the air an' yelled threats. But Jim kep' on till he were 'bout forty paces from the porch. Evidently he were going to give Con the fust shot afore beginnin' action; he hed a sense o' the law in his mind. Suddenly the door of the cottage burst open an' out rushed Con's darter, throwin' herself roun' her father, drawin' down his arms, at the same time yellin', 'Don't shoot! I'll take care of Father. He'll obey orders.'

"Are you sure?" asked Jim calmly.

"I promise you," she called back. Then she dragged her father within the house an' shut the door.

"Jim turned an' walked back, cool an' unconcerned, passin' the men without sayin' nothin' nor even lookin' at 'em this time. He jist seemed preoccupied, an' a few minutes later we seed him workin' over his accounts at his desk, as ef nothin' had happened. Old Ben Hanford, the toughest bloke of the lot, stood up with a kind o' light on his face we'd never seed afore. It war the light o'—what d'ye call it?—a hero-worshipper.

"Thar's a plumb man," he says.

"You bet!"

"Sand!"

"Dynamite an' no fireworks!"

"These were some of the things we heard.

"Reckon we kin count on that air feller dealin' with us on the square," continued Ben.

"Hurrah!" broke from the crowd.

"Let's run out that fool engineer."

"Oh, he's got a nice darter," says one.

"Then give him till ten o'clock to-morrow!" said Ben.

"So we 'p'inted a committee of three to wait on Con, an' the nex' mornin' we hed a team thar, an' sent Con an' his fam'ly, bed-rolls an' the rest, bumpin' down the wash to the station.

"An' let me tell yer, labor troubles in thet camp stopped right there."

IN THE CLOWN'S DONKEY-CART

By Ralph Bergengren

BOBBY was lost. At first, when he had wriggled his plump little body between the board on which he was sitting and the board on which his feet would have rested had his legs been longer, the adventure had seemed altogether engrossing. His father and mother had been so occupied in picking out friends and acquaintances in the crowd of incoming spectators, that they had forgotten all about him. He had fallen with a slight thump, but there was nobody looking at him, so he picked himself up soberly and started out to investigate this new and remarkable country. The upright posts supporting the tiers of seats, and the horizontal pieces that held the posts together, made it all seem a good deal like some queer kind of forest, without leaves or branches. Bobby was used to forests. There was a splendid one right behind his house, covering nearly a quarter of an acre—quite a thick forest, that was always shady if you went far enough into it. And so he felt at home in this sunless place, where the boards rose high above his head and he could see hundreds of feet and countless yards of petticoat.

Bobby was six years old, and it was his first day in trousers. He looked down at them complacently, brushed the dust from his knees, and started out to examine his surroundings. At first it was great fun stepping over the cross-pieces, but pretty soon the monotony began to oppress him. Something doubtful and discouraging began to knock at the little boy's heart. He decided that he had been long enough under the seats, and that he had seen all he wanted to. He turned and hurried back to the place where he had made his entrance.

But where was it? Overhead nothing but shoes and petticoats, and in the distance a thick canvas wall, shutting out all the rest of the world. The temptation assailed Bobby to cry out; but now he was even more afraid of the effect such a sound would have on the people above him. He seemed to see them peering down at him between the boards, laughing and wondering, and he was dreadfully afraid of all those faces. He did n't want to be laughed at—especially to-day, when

he was no longer dressed like a little girl, but had his hair cut and wore his new trousers. Frightened, he began to run, holding his breath lest somebody would hear him. Twice he bumped into one of the tall wooden posts and hurt himself, but he hardly noticed it.

And now it dawned upon Bobby that he had no right to be under the seats at all. People were n't allowed there, and if he met a policeman he would be arrested and taken off to prison. Although he managed to restrain his sobs, two big tears rolled down over his round cheeks, like raindrops on a couple of apples.

All at once he came out from under the seats, and saw thousands of people sitting in a great semicircle around the two rings, on which patches of golden yellow sunlight fell from openings in the gray canvas. Right in front of him stood a big policeman. His back was toward Bobby, and he swung his club carelessly, as if impatient because he had no opportunity to use it.

Not for worlds would the little boy have gone back under the seats. Somewhere among those people his father and his mother were sitting; but the policeman stood between him and them, and would see where he had come from. There were other men near the policeman, but, fortunately, with their backs to Bobby. And at the other side of him hung a wide, bright-colored curtain.

The policeman moved as if to turn round, and Bobby made a little rush and ran behind this curtain. There he stopped, too astonished even to be frightened.

He had seen the circus procession that morning, and never expected to see anything like it again; but here was the procession in all its glory—only, it had n't started. The band was right in front of him, getting their instruments in position. Elephants loomed in the distance. Beautiful ladies with shining eyes and golden hair sat on their horses glittering with tinsel; and men in shining armor had reined up beside them, their horses pawing the soft earth impatiently. Not far from Bobby a strange creature with a white face and enormous painted lips was standing beside a donkey-cart. Bobby recognized him with a thrill of wonder. It was the Clown and the donkey that had delighted the little boy that morning, even more than the elephants. He had been almost afraid of the elephants.

The Clown nodded and grinned. Even if he was surprised at seeing a small boy in that place, his painted face compelled his surprise to assume a benevolent aspect. Bobby felt not in the least afraid of him.

"Hello, Kiddy," said the Clown cheerfully. "Where'd you come from?"

"I'm lost," answered Bobby. He said it courageously, but the statement recalled his troubles, and his lip trembled.

"You look it," agreed the Clown. "I thought at first you might be a cub reporter, but now I see you are a strayed infant. Who's your father and mother?"

"Father's Dad, and my muvver's Mamma," explained Bobby. He felt a sudden confidence in this funny man with the white face and big red mouth, always smiling; and with it came an overwhelming desire to drive the donkey. He had told his father that morning that he could drive the donkey.

One of the beautiful ladies reined up her horse beside them.

"Where'd you get the kid, Tom?" she asked.

The Clown raised his white face and looked up at her. Despite paint and powder, there was something in his glance that reminded Bobby of the way his own father looked at his mother.

"He has a father named Dad and a mother named Mamma," explained the Clown, making a gesture toward the audience. "Out there. Looks a bit like our own Jacko, don't he, Emmy? Question is, how to find 'em before they go crazy." He leaned down to interrogate Bobby. "How did you get away from Dad and Mamma, son?" he asked gently.

The band had begun playing. The curtains parted, and the procession started around the ring.

"I slid down," said Bobby, "and then I walked and walked. And there was n't anything but posts, and people sitting like birds on trees. And—and"—he hesitated and then summoned his courage with a rush—"please, sir, I wish you'd let me drive your donkey."

A cavalcade of beautiful ladies passed them in a little cloud of dust. The lady whom the clown called Emmy turned her horse to join them.

"Take him round with you, Tom," she called back over her shoulder. "If his folks are out there, they'll see him. Somebody'll know him, any way. They must be half crazy about him."

"Righto, as usual!" said the Clown cheerfully. "Come on, then, and drive the donkey." And he lifted Bobby into the little cart and climbed in beside him.

The dust rose around them. The men in armor dashed past, their horses prancing. The music of the band sounded distantly. Camels rocked past with their lumbering gait; then followed open cages, the trainers sitting within, arms folded, surrounded by lions, tigers, or leopards; jockeys on horseback, and elephants—a dozen of them, each with its trunk grasping the tail of its predecessor. Confident that he was safe in the companionship of so important a personage as the Clown, Bobby watched the procession with eyes bulging with happiness. He was going to be part of it.

Then the Clown put the reins between the boy's chubby fingers.

"You see, son, we come at the end of the show," he explained

solemnly. "Those who laugh last are supposed to laugh best, you know." He touched the donkey with the end of his whip, and the little animal broke into a funny trot that carried them out in front of the audience. Bobby was very busy driving, although the man's big hand was close behind his chubby ones. Now and again the Clown cracked his whip and shouted loudly, "Here we are again, ladies and gentlemen!"

With the Clown beside him, Bobby was not in the least afraid of all those people, or even of the policeman. He slapped the reins on the donkey's back and pouted his red lips in an effort to chirrup. All the boys he knew were out there, looking at him, and he sat up very straight. It was great fun driving a donkey in a circus procession. Once he heard somebody crying out joyously, but he paid no attention. It was only when he had twice made the round of the rings and was back at the entrance that he heard the Clown speaking.

"Who's that just inside the curtain, Kiddy?" he asked. "Look kind o' familiar, don't they?"

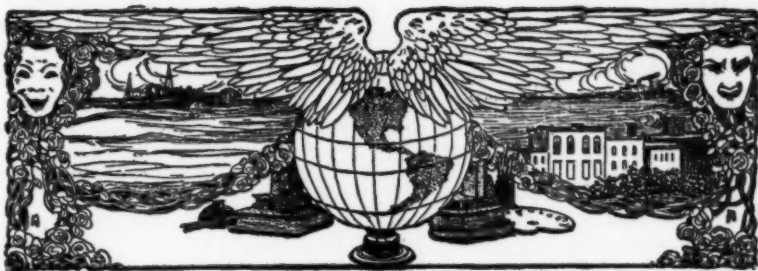
Bobby looked. Just inside the curtain, where the attendants were preparing to close it after the donkey-cart had entered, stood a man and a woman, hand in hand, their faces pale, but their eyes shining.

"Why, it's my Dad and Mamma!" cried Bobby. He shook the reins harder than ever. "Oh, Dad! Oh, Mamma! Look, look, look! I'm drivin' the donkey!"

IN THE ILEX GROVES—VILLA MEDICI, ROME

BY HARVEY M. WATTS

THE sun sinks barred in pines on Mario's crest,
 The screaming swallows fleck the golden air,
 Whilst all the hundred bells of Rome declare,
 In plangent tones, the hour of vesper rest;
 And, as the light dies in the purpling west
 And Night is loosed from out its Alban lair
 Through ilex boskage dim, strange shapes do stare
 As if the unquiet dead with hectic zest
 Of other days sought here their old-time life;
 Giving a gleam of Messalina's face
 Leering through treillage, sick for wanton boon,
 Or the soft line of death-defying grace
 Of Antinous! Ah, what vagrant fancies rife,
 Wan, pallid creatures under the crescent moon!



WAYS OF THE HOUR

A DEPARTMENT OF CURRENT COMMENT AND
CRITICISM—SANE, STIMULATING, OPTIMISTIC

ST. VALENTINE

HOW the dear old Patron Saint of Lovers must sigh as he thinks of the changes that one hundred years has wrought! A century ago he was Eros's chosen henchman. A hundred years ago the fond Lover evoked him humbly, the while pondering for months ahead as to the best rhymes to accompany the inevitable Bleeding Heart (personally drawn and painted). Not to write burning verses to his Charmer's eyebrow or lily-white hand would indeed have proved her wooer lacking in the finer arts of Love. With quill in hand, and sand box near, every Romeo burned midnight candle and filled words to the measure of his Passion.

Circled fifty years. Again the Lover sought upon St. Valentine's Day some gallant way to prove his preference. Progress was his ally. For a few pence he might buy his Heart (sore pierced indeed) and flaming verses, compared with which his own were rustic drivel. To the Stationer's he ran, to find in lacy cages (of paper) Love hidden, armed with cruel darts and o'er-burning words. From many, Lovelace chose the gem to suit his case, thereafter dropping it in the penny-post most gaily.

To-day at St. Valentine's shrine few Lovers go to pray. Rather have they the air of Patrons who graciously remember the Old Saint as do they childish myths to smile or scoff at. Occasionally they make him serve, as when they would offer a Dame of High Degree or Maid of Import costly trophies or flowers worth their weight in

gold. As St. Valentine knows, Lovers still love, but "not in the manner of long ago, humbly, doubting their prowess and putting it to the test in simple ways." Modern Wooers find their days are too short for dalliance, for verse-making or gentle wooing.

The present-day Romeo finds a dozen "beauties" or orchids, or a jewelled bauble, quite as effective and much more to his taste, and his Lady's, than Bleeding Hearts and toil-worn rhymes—if he remembers St. Valentine's Day at all. And yet to the heart of every woman not calloused by the vanities, the personal note strongly appeals. Verses written for Her by Him would be treasured by the right sort of a girl as nothing that could be had for gold.

Love is no less Love because its methods differ. The Eternal difference between the man and the woman in love is, the latter places her abiding trust in sentiment that is richly verbal. Unspoiled women love St. Valentine as fondly as cynical men despise him. True, there are to-day men—elderly men, those simple souls who give savor to humanity—who still write verses to living or dead loves, in honor of the Old Saint. And the children—they never forget him, as Postmen can vouch. Lovers of to-day, however, unless, as has been suggested, he furnishes an excuse for a frolic, a surreptitious offering, or an indulgence to a childish sweetheart or wife, laugh and ignore the Saint of the flying Dart.

MINNA THOMAS ANTRIM

THE NEW TARIFF COMMISSION

FROM the beginning of our Government, the tariff has been the pet of politics, and only twice—during the Civil War, and during the Spanish War, when we had other fish to fry—has revision been attempted without the party revising going under at the next election; or at least receiving a sound rebuke. Through the recent campaign, stand-pat Republicans, in self-defense, and insurgents, because they had instigated it, held out a lot of hope and assurance to the people, through the new tariff commission; claiming that all future revisions would be non-partisan, non-political, unprejudiced, impartial, and all that, because the commission was to study every schedule, know the exact cost of every article of foreign product laid down in our markets, and the cost of the same when home-produced, enabling Congress immediately to adjust all rates on scientific principles, according to the rule so emphatically laid down in the last national platform and national campaign—but so beautifully ignored by the entire Congress, during the last extra session revision—to wit, that the tariff

should cover the difference between the cost of production at home and abroad, with a reasonable margin of profit for the home producer.

Now, while it is never well to be pessimistic, neither is it always safe to be blindly optimistic. *If* the new tariff commission can accomplish all that has been promised—or even a small part of it; if it can do away with tariff tinkering and take the tariff out of politics, it is the most invaluable adjunct which has ever been added to our Government. It seems so simple, so easy of accomplishment—just finding out the difference in cost of home and foreign products in our markets, and telling an eagerly waiting Congress the exact price of reasonable protection to be put upon each and every little item, and the whole disrupting torment of tariff revision is instantly and forever adjusted. But before we rest from our efforts to force Congress to some more honest measure—to get our tariff off the bargain counter—we should seriously ask ourselves, Is it really possible for the new tariff commission, along the lines of investigation laid down for it, to accomplish—not everything, but much of anything? Will manufacturers all over America, and all over the world, graciously volunteer true statements as to the exact cost of producing their wares? It is the one thing they will never do. If they did, it would be found that the cost of production in Germany differed from the cost of production in Japan, for example; that the freight rates from the same place, even, differed materially and rapidly, and that the cost in various parts of America, and internal transportation, differed as much. And even if all of this could be scientifically scheduled, what shall be the point of adjustment? Would it be fair to make it the cost of foreign products laid down in New York, a market close to the north Atlantic coast producers, while the Middle West has heavy additional freights to pay? Shall it be somewhere in the centre of the country—unjust to every one but the manufacturers right there? Shall we rate the price of lemons, for example, at the cost of the California or of the Florida product; and shall it be laid down in New York, or in Boston, or in New Orleans? It would make a very great difference both to importers and home producers. In any case, sufficient ground for argument would still remain to render tariff revision just as complicated and political and partisan as it is to-day. Even if the facts could be scientifically secured, they could never be scientifically adjusted. A single State might arrange a local tariff with comparative satisfaction, but the whole country is too large for the system, and the system too arrogant for hope of coöperation. As a sentiment, the clause in the Republican platform of 1908 is ideal. The end in view is a reform more and more necessary to our national prosperity and integrity. But as a means to that end, the new tariff commission is a farce, and we who are doing our little best toward real tariff reform should realize

it, and refuse to remit our efforts, which must finally succeed in taking the tariff really out of politics and away from the control of extortionate monopolies. It can be done and it must be done. We can do it, but not through the new tariff commission.

WILLARD FRENCH

FADS IN LITERATURE

BOOKS come in schools now, like whales, and writers strive to follow the reigning fad rather than blaze any individual trail. Historical novels, nature stories, strenuous labor fiction, afternoon tea tales—all have had their seasons, and so similar have some of the best-known of these been that they were published in parallel columns and explained on the ground of psychic coincidence; a term which sounded so much better than plainer talk.

Yet even the sea stories, which seem to strike an actually true and living note amid the society novelettes and the dialect atrocities, fall into a certain sameness that not either Conrad or Connolly—two of the best writers in this field—escape. The beating waves dash high and higher, but by-and-by even this gets monotonous and a sort of intellectual seasickness sets in.

Motor stories and the Uplift have had their day. The Muckrake has become a joke. We stand and wait with folded hands, yet all about us real life continues to break against the rocks and burst its torrents occasionally under the sinister vengeance that Fate wreaks upon its human puppets.

Persons of all ages and conditions read ravenously to-day—not that any epidemic of intelligence has broken out, but because “literature” is cheap and libraries are free. The demand for fiction of a certain sort has become a cry in the market-place. Fortunes are found in books that meet the popular approval of the department-store buyers. The typical story just so long and so wide seems to be the one that pleases the general public the best, and unless some literary earthquake strikes at the root of it, our writers will have to keep their psychological studies and fantasies corked up and in sealed tins for a new era of enlightenment, when the selling qualities of a book—its length and breadth and weight—will not be of so much consequence as its theme, its purpose, or the beauty, maybe, of its workmanship.

As it is, we must have bells and barkers to sell books, as if they were cabbages, and at the turn of a crank a new crop of heroes and heroines break out like a rash on the counters. And then they are done into plays for stage production just as soon as they have made their “hit,” so that every ounce of marketable value may be squeezed out of their substance.

But there must come a day when this cut-paper fiction will play itself out, for power is not lacking in our singers and our scribes to sound finer harmonies than any that are being done just at present. Then shall we build the statelier mansions for our souls, and the much-loved, much-worn volume in the ingle-nook will comfort us, and teach us, and send us out again to our work and our play with hope in our hearts and glad faces turned to the sky.

KATE MASTERSON

THE ADVENT OF THE MAN OF GREAT WEALTH IN THE AMUSEMENT WORLD

THE announcement which made public the conditions surrounding the retirement of Oscar Hammerstein from the field of grand opera was full of significance for those who look further than the present cause of action.

That the amusement calling should have reached the stage where our representative men of finance—our multi-millionaires—seek to control the conduct of the most important phase of stage presentations, constitutes an epoch.

It does not seem so long ago that the theatrical business was regarded with such suspicion and pessimism that capital for investment was wholly lacking, while the majority of the managers themselves were without the dignity which comes from the possession of an office for the conduct of their affairs. Only within the last twenty years has the method of transacting business on the public pavements been abandoned. The spectacle of the best known amusement caterers parading the streets of "the rialto" with date-books in their hands, in confab with stars and celebrities, is of vivid recollection.

It was when Maurice Grau organized a corporation, consisting of his personal friends, to provide the means of maintenance for the Metropolitan Opera House, that the man of great wealth began to take an interest in music and the drama. The outcome from the outset was favorable, for dividends ranging from seventy to one hundred and fifty per cent. were prevalent during the régime of the Maurice Grau Opera Company.

The extraordinary fact that grand opera, as conducted during the season of 1910-'11, in New York, Philadelphia, Boston, and Chicago, is under the absolute control of such men as Otto F. Kahn, Clarence Mackay, Edwin T. Stotesbury, William K. Vanderbilt, John C. Shaffer, and Eben T. Jordan, is perhaps but a logical outcome of the progressive era to which we are now emerging. When it is considered that The New Theatre is maintained by the same gentlemen and their colleagues,

the question which arises is, Will the theatres and the opera-houses of this country be amalgamated in the manner which now is so popular with industries of a less artistic nature? Will the problem of providing artistic treats for the eighty million Americans be solved through stock and bond operations? Stranger things can happen!

We know that the opening of the amusement season of 1910-'11 has been ushered in with a bitter strife between the two most important business institutions prevailing, and it does not seem unlikely that the men who saw fit to end the operations of the most worthy impresario of his day, Oscar Hammerstein, in order that the era of fierce competition should cease, will find a reason to purchase the control of one of the contending interests on the dramatic side, and thus evolve a period of universal peace in the amusement calling. Then will come into being the much prophesied billion-dollar trust in theatredom!

There can be no question but that we are fast approaching the period when the once despised theatrical industry, which only in the last fifteen years has been regarded as a legitimate business, will be conducted on a basis of system and rectitude which must necessarily benefit all who are affiliated therein!

ROBERT GRAU

LINES

BY RUTH GUTHRIE HARDING

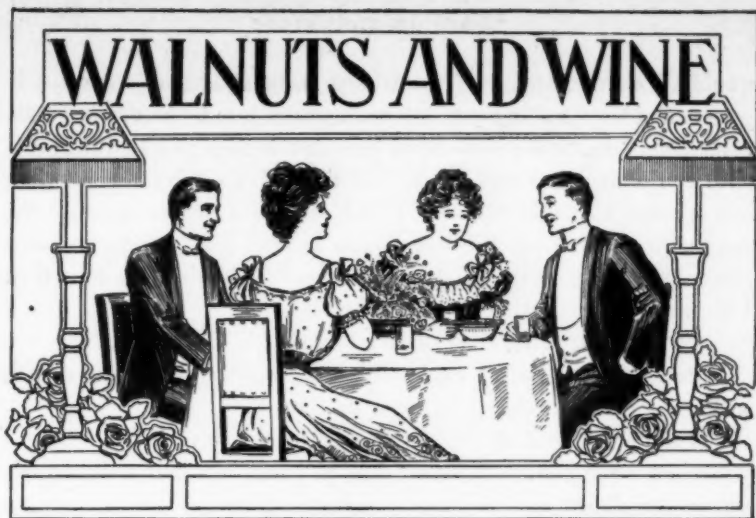
NEVER sings a city-robin on the gray-stone window-ledges
But I dream the long, long meadows where the sweet prim-
roses be;

To his call I guess an answer, from deep grass and tangled hedges—
There's a thrill of other spring-times in the country soul of me!

Never falls light rain above me but I hear its gentle patter
On a lonely roof at even as I heard it years ago;
Thro' the music, warmth, and fragrance, past the sweep of careless
chatter,
Throbs the silence of far places where the pines and birches grow.

I shall see a few more spring-times, then shall heed no answer lilted
To that first full-throated robin, hear no rain above my head. . . .
Give me, God, the fresh primroses when my formal wreaths have
wilted—

Let me lie till Thine Own Spring-time with the pines beside my bed!



THE GOOD SAMARITANS

Conductor: "Fares, please."

Old Lady Passenger (fumbling for her purse): "Is this the car for Auburn Heights?"

Conductor: "No, ma'am. One along in a few minutes."

Alert Young Man (on her right): "Well, she can change at Grove Street, can't she?"

Conductor: "Sure she can. Take a green car marked First Avenue. Transfer-checks on the right. Fares, please."

Old Lady: "I want to call on my cousin who's took a house on Elgin Square."

Alert Young Man: "That ain't on the First Avenue line."

Conductor: "Who said it was? Your best car, then, lady, is the Fairmount Village line. Get off at Lafayette Street and walk four blocks."

Benign Old Gentleman (leaning forward from opposite side): "Excuse me, madam, but it's much easier to take a Greenville car. I used to live on Porter Square myself. A red car marked Western Point."

Alert Young Man: "Not a red car, mister. Used to be yellow, but they're white now."

Old Gentleman: "They were red five years ago, I'm sure."

Conductor: "All going to be green next month. Fares, please."

Old Lady: "Then, what's my best car when I change, did you say?"

Irascible Matron (on her left): "If I was you, ma'am, I

Walnuts and Wine

would n't change at all. If you keep right aboard this car till it goes round the loop and over the creek and ask to be let off at Searle Street, you can take a cross-town line that'll take you to Wulfson's Corner for an eight-cent check, and from there it is n't more than five minutes to Elgin Street. I declare, it's a shame the way the conductors treat poor helpless women on this line, trying to bamboozle 'em for the sake of an extra fare. This ain't the first time I've seen 'em."

Alert Young Man: "Well, I guess that's right, too."

Conductor: "It ain't Elgin Street she wants. We connect with a Belford Place car that goes right by there."

Matron: "Well, don't the two run into each other?"

Alert Young Man: "No'm; they're three 'n-a half miles apart, one in Grandview an' the other in South Hilford."

Matron (subsiding): "Oh! I always thought——"

Old Lady: "Then, what'd I better do?"

Conductor: "You can get off right here if you want, lady, an' take a car that'll be along in twelve minutes if it's on time—'C' an' Brockway Streets, via Bayville."

Old Lady: "I don't know. I think I'd rather stay on this car, now I've got a seat, and it's so cold and all. Besides, I'm late now. Did you say to change at Baywood?"

Conductor: "Not if you stay aboard this car. Fares, please."

Old Gentleman: "It is n't Baywood, madam; it's Bayville. I don't wonder you get confused with these names. It was years before I could get the difference between Fisher's Falls and Fisher's Avenue straight, and living on Castleton Crescent all the time."

Alert Young Man: "But she don't want Bayville, anyhow. Lucky she don't! It's a mighty poor line at that."

Matron: "Huh! I know some real elegant folks on it, all the same."

Old Lady: "Well, I'm sure I don't know what to do when I change."

Conductor: "Just leave it to me, ma'am. I'll see you get right. Fares, please."

Old Lady: "Oh dear! I guess I'll get out right here."

Conductor: "This stop won't do you no good."

Old Gentleman: "But you don't change here, any way."

Alert Y. M.: "No, no! Sit still! He'll look after you."

Matron: "Oh! I'm just as much obliged, but I've just remembered I left my money on the bureau." (Exit.)

Samuel F. Batchelder

Walnuts and Wine

A BOON, ST. VALENTINE!

By Ella Hutchison Ellwanger

St. Valentine, a boon I crave;
A boon of your bestowing.
It is a heart I would enslave
Without the owner's knowing.
Some men are just a little shy,
And he among the number;
It would not do for me to sigh—
That would our friendship sunder.
For friendship oft to love may turn,
But love to friendship, never!
Dear Patron Saint, help him discern
That I am good—and clever.
I would not ask this, dear old Saint,
But I—I think he loves me;
And only has that heart so faint
That never won fair ladye.



DE-LIGHTED!

"Henrietta," said the stern-faced father in a tone that scintillated with sarcasm, "that young man Grinsum has been here three nights in succession, and he does not go until midnight and after. I think you had better invite the fellow to bring his trunk and make his home here."

"Oh, you dear papa!" cried the girl, with innocent joy. "May I? Oh, won't that be lovely! It was just what he wanted, but he was too bashful to ask you. Oh, but won't he be just too delighted when I tell him this evening!"

And he was—not!

R. M. Winans



TIMING THE EGGS

Bridget: "Plase, mum, will ye lind me yer watch fer ter bile ther eggs?"

Mistress: "Why, Bridget, you have a clock in the kitchen, have n't you?"

Bridget: "Yis, mum; but the clock is slow, mum."

H. E. Zimmerman



THE INEVITABLE

No man makes a success in life but some fellow turns up who has started him on the right road.

La Touche Hancock

Walnuts and Wine

'RASTUS IS PUZZLED

An aged colored man was passing a fish store when he stopped to examine a huge turtle chained in the doorway as an advertisement.

He had never seen a turtle before, and he prodded the strange creature curiously. Suddenly he popped his finger into his mouth with a howl of pain. After the finger had stopped bleeding, he gazed at it ruefully, then eyed the turtle apprehensively.

"What's the matter, 'Rastus?" asked the fish-dealer, with a grin.

"Nuffin', sah, nuffin'. Ah was jest wonderin' whether Ah had been bit or stung."

L. W. Libbey

THE DOG'S JOB

An Atlanta man tells of an amusing experience he had in a mountainous region in a southwestern State, where the inhabitants are notoriously shiftless. Arriving at a dilapidated shanty at the noon hour, he inquired as to the prospects for getting dinner.

The head of the family, who had been "resting" on a fallen tree in front of his dwelling, made reply to the effect that he "guessed Ma'd hev suthin' onto the table putty soon."

With this encouragement, the traveller dismounted. To his chagrin, however, he soon discovered that the food set before him was such that he could not possibly "make a meal." He made such excuses as he could for his lack of appetite, and finally bethought himself of a kind of nourishment which he might venture to take, and which was sure to be found in any locality. He asked for some milk.

"Don't have milk no more," said the head of the place. "The dawg's dead."

"The dog!" cried the stranger. "What on earth has the dog to do with it?"

"Well," explained his host meditatively, "them cows don't seem to know 'nough to come up an' be milked theirselves. The dog, he used to go for 'em an' fetch 'em up."

Edwin Tarrise

HAD HIS PREFERENCE

Hospitable Farmer: "Now, stranger, sit right down to the table. You are welcome to your dinner, but you'll have to eat what the rest of us do."

Stranger: "Thanks, but I—er—if it's all the same to you, I'll eat what the rest of you don't."

T. C. McConnell

Walnuts and Wine

A DISSENTING VOICE

By John Kendrick Bangs

How men can rave o'er golden hair
I really cannot see.
No Phyllis, Maude, or Myrtle fair
Hath e'er appealed to me.
I do not like their cherry lips,
I do not like their smiles.
I hate their dainty finger-tips,
And much despise their wiles.

What beauty lies in dimples deep
I truly cannot guess.
The dimple's really quite a cheap
Old type of loveliness,
And why the poets waste their time
And knock their wits about
In writing reams of silly rhyme
To them, I can't make out.

I would not walk across the street
To bask in Daphne's glance.
I don't consider Daphne sweet,
And Phyllis cannot dance!
At least, to my poor mortal gaze
The verdict is she can't—
Her vaunted grace suggests the ways
Of some old elephant.

Rejected? I? Well I guess not!
What's that I hear you say?
These lines are merely tommy-rot
By some old soured jay?
The ravings of a jilted man,
Whom Phyllis hath turned down?
I'd have you know my name is ANNE
MATILDA LEMONS BROWNE!

TEMPERATE

In a recent book-list appears the following line:

First Aid to the Injured. *Drinkwater.*

Karl von Kraft

Walnuts and Wine

HOUSEHOLD ECONOMICS

To make biscuits light—drench with gasoline and ignite before serving.

To keep servants—chloroform and lock in the cellar.

To get rid of peddlers—buy all they have.

To remove fruit-stains from linen—use the scissors.

To keep rats out of the pantry—put all the food in the cellar.

To entertain women visitors—let them read all your private papers.

To entertain men visitors—feed the brutes.

To keep children at home—lock 'em in the garret.

To keep hubby at home—lock up all his clothes.

To prevent accidents in the kitchen—fill the kerosene-can with water.

To stop leaks in pipes—send a hurry-up for the nearest plumber.

To economize on coal—get a gas-range.

To test freshness of eggs—drop on hard surface.

To propitiate the janitor—you can't do it. *R. M. Winans*

NOT EXACTLY AS HE MEANT

An enthusiastic suburbanite was showing a guest about his domain, dilating on its joys and comforts as they walked. The guest ventured:

"Yes, but I don't think there's much money in it."

"Great guns, man! Money in it? Every cent I've got and all I can borrow is in it."

Ruby Baughman

VERY FINE

Isaac's house was for sale, and he told his friend Abram about an offer he had had.

"Samuel Levinski saidt he vould gif me five t'ousand dollars vor idt."

"Huh!" Abram grunted scornfully. "He aindt got fife dollars to his name—he candt buy idt."

"Vell, I know he candt. But idt vas a mighty fine offer."

Herbert C. Forrester

THIS HARD, CRUEL WORLD

Mrs. Crawford: "You can have all the bread and butter you want, but no more cake."

Willie: "Say, Ma, how is it I can never have a second helping of any of the things I like?"

J. J. O'Connell

Walnuts and Wine

A GOOD EXCUSE

A second-grade boy in one of the Philadelphia schools came in late recently, when the following colloquy between the teacher and pupil ensued:

"Why are you late, Thomas?"

"Could n't come no sooner."

"You should get up earlier. All the first-grade children were here on time."

"I was up in time, but I could n't come no sooner."

"Why could n't you come any sooner if you were up in time?"

"I—I—I could n't find my pants."

"That's a good excuse, Thomas. You may take your seat."

Grub S. Arts

AN ACCIDENTAL OMISSION

The Cynic was discoursing on matrimony.

"You say that no man ought to marry a woman who is fat or thin, tall or short, large or small," he said. "Then in your opinion the only sort of woman one ought to marry is one who is of medium size?"

"Mercy!" said the Cynic. "How forgetful I am! I forgot her!"

Clifton B. Dodd

DOUBLE-POINTED

"Say, I don't know just how to take Miss Cutting's comment on my singing."

"What did she say?"

"She said Caruso's voice was excellent, but mine was better still."

George Frederick Wilson

TAKING NO RISKS

A Philadelphia woman who is exceedingly fond of animals had an odd experience while waiting at a city railway station for a belated train.

In the seat next to her sat a small dog, which evidently belonged to an elaborately dressed woman just beyond.

He was a friendly little fellow, and looked up at the first-mentioned lady with a wag of his tail, as though desirous to make friends. She leaned down and patted him on the head.

His mistress immediately reached out and took her precious pet into her lap.

"Pardon me," she said apologetically, "but my dog is not allowed to kiss strangers."

T.

Walnuts and Wine

NO MORE AT PRESENT

In the capacity of a house servant for the Carters in her early days, Aunt Dianah had imbibed a wholesome respect for the Queen's English. Not so her husband, Uncle Ike. The old man had little use for the letter "r," a notable example of which was found in his pronunciation of the word "more."

"Gib me some 'lasses, Dianah," said Uncle Ike one evening at supper.

"Don't say, 'Gib me some 'lasses,' Ike," rebuked the captious Dianah. "You oughter say, 'Gib me some mo-lasses.'"

"Look yere, you," demanded her spouse: "how you spects me to say mo' 'lasses when I done hain't had none yit?"

John E. Quinn

HOUSEHOLD METAPHOR

Boy: "What is a white lie, Pop?"

Father: "Most of the milk we buy, my son."

Edmund Moberly

CHURCHITIS

By Etta Anthony Baker

So many people suffer
From this dread malady,
It comes on Sunday morning,
And lasts till after tea.

Its symptoms often vary;
It brings on prolonged sleep;
Induces shrinking nervousness;
Young patients often weep.

But one thing I have noticed
In cases roundabout:
The victims all seem anxious
To have their church cut out.

IN NO HURRY

A kind-hearted old lady, while visiting a prison, said to one of the inmates, "I suppose you will be glad when your time is up."

"Well, not so very."

"Not glad? Why not?"

"I'm here for eloping with the servant girl, and my wife will be waiting for me outside."

Grub S. Arts

Walnuts and Wine

*Good morning! Have you used
Pears' Soap?*



A Word to Mothers

The comfort of a baby largely depends upon the condition of its skin, which is so tender and sensitive that only constant and unremitting care can keep it free from irritation. The first necessity and safeguard in these matters is a soap that will act like balm upon the baby skin, that soothes while it cleanses, is kind to the skin, and of a gentle emollient daintiness. No soap answers to this description so completely as

Pears' Soap

No soap is so comforting for a baby, so pure or so perfect in its hygienic influence. Bad soaps injure the skin and worry the baby, Pears softens, preserves and beautifies.

The skin of a baby is kept sweet, wholesome and healthy and retains its baby softness and beauty to later years by the regular use of Pears.

OF ALL SCENTED SOAPS PEARS' OTTO OF ROSE IS THE BEST.

"All rights secured."

In writing to advertisers, kindly mention LIPPINCOTT'S.

Walnuts and Wine

WHEREIN WILLIE WAS FAVORED

Dorothy, Delia, and Daisy, three youngsters of a New Jersey town, were discoursing about the baby brothers who had taken up their residence in the three families during the past year.

"My little brother Tom's got a lovely silver mug that Grandfather just sent him," said Dorothy. "It's a beauty; and he had a silver knife and fork from Grandma, too."

"My little brother Harry's got a bee-yutiful carved rattle that Uncle Dick sent him from Japan," said Delia. "It's the prettiest rattle that ever was."

"My little brother Willie's not so big as your brothers," said Daisy, with an air of endeavoring to conceal a feeling of triumph, "but the doctor says he's had more spasms than any other baby in this whole neighborhood, so there!"

Howard Morse

OILING THE MOTOR

"Giles," said De Whizz to his chauffeur, before he started on his run across the State, "have you oiled the machine thoroughly?"

"Yes, sir."

"Are you sure, Giles?"

"Yes, sir. I have filled the spring cups and the engine reservoir, and I have greased the cornet-a-piston, the pluribus unum, the exhaust pipe, the muffled tread, the thingumbob, the rigamajig, and both the hot-boxes."

"Are you sure those are all the parts you have oiled, Giles?"

"Yes, sir."

"You have forgotten the most important place of all. Take the can and squirt a few drops of oil on the license number, so that the dust will collect on it and make it hard to read. Always remember to lubricate the license number, Giles."

M. L. Hayward

OF COURSE

The most curious thing—a woman not being curious.

Flinders Snap

THEATRICAL NEWS

By C. H. Martin

Mary has a little calf

("With that," you say, "don't bore us.")

All right. But that's the reason Ma-

Ry can't get in the chorus.

Walnuts and Wine,



A Tempting Dessert Delicacy

to serve in place of pies or pastry, and at
luncheons or afternoon teas.

Nabisco Sugar Wafers make instant
appeal to everybody.

They have a charm wholly their own,
and are exquisitely superior to any other
confection delicacy ever produced.

In ten cent tins

Also in twenty-five cent tins

CHOCOLATE TOKENS — NABISCO-like
goodness enclosed in a shell of rich chocolate.

NATIONAL BISCUIT COMPANY

Walnuts and Wine

CHARLIE'S NEW AUTO

"Charlie's perfectly wild over his new motor-car," remarked a man to a friend.

"Wild over it!" responded the latter. "You should see and hear him when he's under it!"

Stewart Roberts

THE BUSINESS END OF IT

"I would die for you," said the rich suitor.

"How soon?" asked the practical girl.

Dulcimer Dawson

IN SEARCH OF HIS HOME

A peaceable resident of West Sixty-Fifth Street was rudely awakened from sleep last week, at about 2.30 A.M., by a loud ring at his door-bell.

Throwing open the window, he stuck his head out and in no very pleasant manner demanded to know what was wanted.

"Scuse me, sir," answered a muddled voice. "Does Jones—hic—hic—live here?"

"Jones?" said the party addressed angrily. "Of course not. What the devil do you mean by ringing people's bells at this time of morning? Who are you, any way?"

"Who'm I?" asked the disturber, apparently surprised at not being recognized. "Why, I'm Jones."

Louis H. Wagner

A SUGGESTIVE TITLE

He: "I wonder what the meaning of that picture is? The youth and maiden are in a tender attitude."

She: "Oh, don't you see? He has just asked her to marry him and she is accepting him. How sweet! What does the artist call the picture?"

He (looking about): "Oh, I see. It's written on a card at the bottom—'Sold.'"

Joe King

REAL ECONOMY

A New England mother had come upon her eight-year-old son enjoying a feast whereof the components were jam, butter, and bread.

"Son," said the mother, "don't you think it a bit extravagant to eat butter with that fine jam?"

"No, ma'am," was the response. "It's economical; the same piece of bread does for both."

Elgin Burroughs

Walnuts and Wine



Telephone Etiquette

Co-operation is the keynote of telephone success.

For good service there must be perfect co-operation between the party calling, the party called, and the trained operator who connects these two.

Suggestions for the use of the telephone may be found in the directory and are worthy of study, but the principles of telephone etiquette are found in everyday life.

One who is courteous face to face should also be courteous

when he bridges distance by means of the telephone wire.

He will not knock at the telephone door and run away, but will hold himself in readiness to speak as soon as the door is opened.

The 100,000 employees of the Bell system and the 25,000,000 telephone users constitute the great telephone democracy.

The success of the telephone democracy depends upon the ability and willingness of each individual to do his part.

**AMERICAN TELEPHONE AND TELEGRAPH COMPANY
AND ASSOCIATED COMPANIES**

One Policy

One System

Universal Service

In writing to advertisers, kindly mention LIPPINCOTT'S.

Walnuts and Wine

THE MOVING WORLD

By W. J. Lampton

The world is full of people
Starting something every day,
Starting something,
Starting something;
They're shoving and they're pushing,
But they seem to miss the way
Of getting past the starting-point,
And presently they slump,
And their dreams of wealth and glory
Tumble over on the dump.
And yet
We must n't forget
That in the sphere of action,
Morals, commerce, science, art,
Nobody ever hits the top
Unless he tries to start.

BUSINESS INSTINCT

To modernize an old prophecy, "Out of the mouths of babes shall come much worldly wisdom." Mr. K. has two boys whom he dearly loves. One day he gave each a dollar to spend. After much bargaining, they brought home a wonderful four-wheeled steamboat and a beautiful train of cars. For awhile the transportation business flourished, and all was well, but one day Craig explained to his father that while business had been good, he could do so much better if he only had the capital to buy a train of cars like Joe's. His arguments must have been good, for the money was forthcoming. Soon after, little Joe, with probably less logic but more loving, became possessed of a dollar to buy a steamboat like Craig's. But Mr. K., who had furnished the additional capital, looked in vain for the improved service. The new rolling stock was not in evidence, and explanations were vague and unsatisfactory, as is often the case in the railroad game at which men play. It took a stern court of inquiry to develop the fact that the railroad and steamship had simply changed hands—and at a mutual profit of one hundred per cent. And Mr. K., as he told his neighbor, said it was worth that much to know that his boys would not need much of a legacy from him.

P. A. Kershaw

Walnuts and Wine

MENNEN'S

"FOR MINE"



Mennen's Borated Talcum **Powder**

keeps my skin in healthy condition.

Sample Box for 4c. stamp.

GERHARD MENNEN CO.
NEWARK, N. J.



Trade Mark

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Walnuts and Wine

JUST WHAT HE LIKED

Kirke La Shelle noticed that an actor he knew was wearing a mourning band on his arm.

"It's for my father," the actor explained. "I've just come from his funeral."

La Shelle expressed his sympathy. The actor's grief was obviously very real. "I attended to all the funeral arrangements," he said. "We had everything just as Father would have liked it."

"Were there many there?" asked La Shelle.

"Many there?" cried the actor with pride. "Why, my boy, we turned 'em away!"

M. L. Hayward

THE MAIDEN'S FINISH

By Clifton B. Douc

When Mr. Wordsworth did deny

The answer she had given,

The little maid still made reply:

"O master, we are seven!"

A hungry bear did then her seize—

Oh, crool the maiden's fate!

They say her dying words were these:

"O master, we are ate!"

SO SETTLED

"Yes, I *am* opposed to American girls marryin' furriners," said old Mrs. Sipes. "I'm jist that opposed to it that if *my* girls can't marry people of their own sex, they need n't marry at all, and that 's all there is about it!"

Lizabel B. McCurdy

If you look pleasant all the time, it will be easier for the photographer to get a good likeness.

Ellis O. Jones

ONLY NINE LEFT

Harry had been naughty, and ~~was~~ summoned before his mother. "My boy," said his mother, "I've said the Ten Commandments over and over to you, and now you've broken one of them."

"That leaves only nine, then, does n't it, Mamma?" remarked the boy.

His mother let it go at that.

Hugh Morist

June All Winter Long

You can plan no happier trip this Winter than a visit to the American Mediterranean, the land of sunshine and cheery skies, reached by the big, splendidly equipped steamers of the

Atlantic, Gulf & West Indies Steamship Lines

Direct Sailings to that wonderful winterless region bathed by the Southern Atlantic, the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean Sea, including Porto Rico, Bahamas, Cuba, Florida and San Domingo.

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Walnuts and Wine

HIS KIND

A drummer in New Orleans was breakfasting one morning in a hotel café, when a vegetarian chanced to sit opposite him. Pretty soon the latter took occasion to warn the drummer of the risk he was incurring by reason of his diet.

Pointing to the eggs in front of the travelling man, the vegetarian exclaimed:

"Don't make a graveyard of your stomach!"

"I seldom eat meat," politely replied the drummer, with a smile.

"An egg is practically the same as meat," continued the vegetarian. "It eventually becomes a chicken."

"The kind I eat never become chickens," said the drummer decisively.

"Impossible!" exclaimed the vegetarian. "What kind of eggs do you eat?"

"Boiled eggs," was the response.

Taylor Edwards

ESTABLISHING THE PLURAL

Fred, four years of age, had returned from a visit to his uncle's farm. When asked what pleased him most, he said:

"I liked the geese. We had a big goose for dinner one day."

"How do you tell the difference between a goose and geese?" asked his father.

"That's easy," said Fred. "One goose is a goose, and two geese is geeses."

H. E. Zimmerman

A SERENADE

By Charles Houston Goudiss

A youth went forth to serenade
The lady he loved best,
And by her home at evening
When the sun had gone to rest
He warbled until daylight,
And would have warbled more,
But morning light disclosed a sign,
"To Let," upon the door.

The fairest of to-day's Brides may be the Mother-in-Law of the Future.

H. D. G.

Walnuts and Wine

HADDON HALL

ATLANTIC CITY, NEW JERSEY

CENTRALLY LOCATED

OPEN ENTIRE YEAR



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Horseback Riding
Roller Chair Riding on the Boardwalk

Booklet and Rates on Application

Leeds & Lippincott

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Walnuts and Wine

THE MISSING LINK AT LAST

Dressed in the latest cycling costume, with goggles all complete, the motor cyclist gayly toot-tooted past the Park on his way to the Zoo. Suddenly he stopped and said to a small urchin:

"I say, my boy, am I right for the Zoo?"

The boy gasped at so strange a sight.

"You may be all right if they have a spare cage," he said when he could find his tongue, "but you 'd ha' stood a better chance if you 'd 'ad a tail."

P. R. H.

THE BOYS KNEW WHICH

A Wyoming missionary, new to the country and its characteristics, stopped at a log school-house, where the schoolmarin invited him to speak to the embryo cowpunchers and ranchers squirming in their seats.

The missionary chose to talk upon the beauty and importance of unselfishness, and to illustrate his point presupposed two little boys who were alike save in the respect that where one was always giving, the other was always getting. One would give his candy, marbles, "ca'tridges" for his 22, to his little playmates, but the other was determined to get—was always reaching out his hand for the candy, marbles, and "ca'tridges."

"Now, children," demanded the youthful sky-pilot, "which one of those little boys will grow into the most successful man?"

Every arm swung vigorously in its shoulder-socket, and a vociferous chorus replied:

"The feller that gits!"

Caroline Lockhart

AN OMINOUS MOTTO

Among the presents lately showered upon a dusky bride in a rural section of Virginia, was one that was the gift of an old woman with whom both bride and groom were great favorites.

Some time ago, it appears, the old woman accumulated a supply of cardboard mottoes, which she worked and had framed as occasion arose.

So it happened that in a neat combination of blues and reds, suspended by a cord of orange, there hung over the table whereon the other presents were displayed for the delectation of the wedding guests, this motto:

FIGHT ON; FIGHT EVER.

Edwin Tarrisse

Walnuts and Wine

"THE NEWPORT OF THE SOUTH"

Hotel

PARK-IN-THE-PINES

AIKEN, SOUTH CAROLINA

A Charming Winter Home Under Sunny
Southern Skies

THIS handsomely appointed hotel at Aiken, S. C., is in a region famed as a health center. The pine-laden atmosphere is the driest east of the Rockies, with a mean temperature of 52 degrees. The water supply is from the purest of artesian springs.

HOTEL PARK-IN-THE-PINES

stands on elevated ground in the midst of two hundred acres of long leaf pine. It is one of the newest and most complete tourist hostelrys in the south. It has 400 feet southern frontage, is provided with broad verandas and a solarium, and contains 300 spacious rooms. Its interiors are luxuriously furnished and provided with every modern convenience. *Consumptives excluded.*

Aiken is easily reached by the Southern Railway from New York in 22 hours, in through Pullman Sleepers.

Golf
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Hotel now open for the reception of guests. Formal opening January 10th, 1911. Harry W. Priest Co., proprietors. Management of J. A. Sherrard.

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J. A. SHERRARD

HOTEL PARK-IN-THE-PINES

AIKEN, SOUTH CAROLINA

In writing to advertisers, kindly mention LIPPINCOTT'S.

Walnuts and Wine

MUSICAL REPARTEE

By Charles C. Jones

Zeke Brown an' me done had er little 'spute.

Zeke rampaged round, an' den he stopped an' said,

"Look hyah, ol' man, don' yo' go actin' cute;

Else Ah 'll play tunes on yo' ol' woolly haid!"

An' den Ah say, "Whut 's dat yo' sez 'bout how

Yo' 'll play tunes on mah haid, Ah 'd lak to know?

Ef yo' does dat, Ah tells yo' hyah an' now,

Ah 'll mek yo' dance to dat dar music, sho'!"

FULLY PREPARED

When a certain little girl of Baltimore was recently sent off by her mother to visit an aunt in Washington, the youngster was cautioned that she must always be "on time" for breakfast while at her aunt's house.

"Don't give them any occasion to complain, dearie," said the mother. "You're always *so* late for breakfast at home."

When the little girl returned home, about the first thing she told her mother was, "I was down to the table every morning just as soon as any of them."

"Glad to hear that, dearie," said the proud mother. "How did you manage to be so punctual?"

"Every night," explained the younister, "I put on my nightgown and slept in my clothes, so 's to be nice an' ready in the morning."

Fenimore Martin

POOR BROWN!

"Sorry, Brown," said the doctor, after the examination. "You're in a very serious condition. I'm afraid I'll have to operate on you."

"Operate!" gasped Brown. "Why, I have n't any money for operations. I'm only a poor working-man."

"You're insured, are you not?"

"Yes, but I don't get that until after I'm dead."

"Oh, that 'll be all right," said the doctor consolingly.

Louis H. Wagner

About the first step towards reforming a man is to catch him in the act.

Joe King

Walnuts and Wine

All over America

White Rock

The MOST POPULAR WATER



For Children While Cutting Their Teeth.

An Old and Well-Tried Remedy,

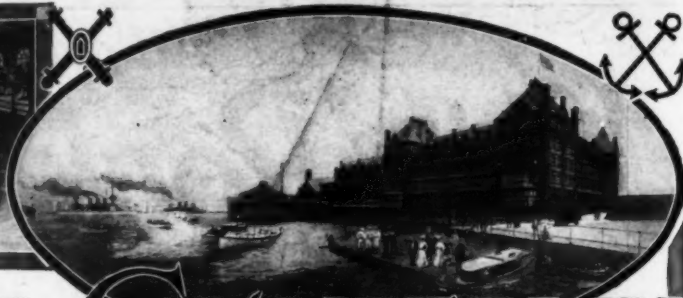
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MRS. WINSLOW'S SOOTHING SYRUP

has been used for over FIFTY YEARS by MILLIONS of MOTHERS for their CHILDREN WHILE TEETHING with PERFECT SUCCESS. IT SOOTHES THE CHILD, SOFTENS THE GUMS, ALLAYS ALL PAIN, CURES WIND COLIC, and is the best remedy for DIARRHŒA. Sold by all Druggists in every part of the world. Be sure and ask for *Mrs. Winslow's Soothing Syrup*, and take no other kind.

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There is nothing as beneficial as the right sort of bathing, and here at The Chamberlin is every sort of bath known to science. A magnificent, ceramic-tiled sea-pool, 40 x 70 feet, radiant with sunlight, perfectly ventilated and filled with pure, fresh sea water. Air and water are always of an agreeable temperature and a competent swimming master is in charge. Then there are medical baths of every description. Nauheim baths, electric cabinets, massage and tonic baths and Dr. Baruch's System. These are particularly recommended for Insomnia, Nervousness, Rheumatism, Gout and kindred disorders. Our resident physician is an expert in hydrotherapy, and all baths are given under his supervision.

Every Facility for Rest and Recreation

is found at The Chamberlin. The hotel is magnificently appointed, yet homelike. It is located right at the water's edge, overlooking Hampton Roads and Fortress Monroe. You will enjoy the invigorating air, the unusual surroundings, the excellent cooking—real old Southern "mammy" kind—and you may indulge in your favorite recreation—Golf, Tennis, Fishing, Boating, Bathing, Automobiling, etc. For further information and interesting illustrated booklets, apply at all tourist bureaus or transportation offices, or address me personally.

GEORGE F. ADAMS, Manager, Fortress Monroe, Va.
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THE BEAUTY OF YOUR SILVERWARE
depends on its brilliancy and cleanliness.

ELECTRO Silver Polish SILICON

with little effort and small expense will
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To demonstrate the superiority of Henderson's Tested Seeds, we have made up six of the best we have, into a Henderson Collection, consisting of one packet each of the following great specialties:

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To obtain for our annual catalogue, "Everything for the Garden," described below, the largest possible distribution, we make the following unusual offer: To everyone who will mail us ten cents, mentioning this publication, we will mail the catalogue and also send our Henderson Specialty Collection, as above.

EVERY EMPTY ENVELOPE COUNTS AS CASH

This Collection is encased in a coupon envelope, which, when emptied and returned, will be accepted as 25c. cash payment on any order of one dollar or over.

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Our 1911 catalogue is, without exception, the best we have ever issued. 208 pages, 8 colored plates, 800 photo engravings, showing actual results without exaggeration, make it the most complete as well as beautiful horticultural publication of the year. Also contains full cultural directions for flowers and vegetables.

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It is a SAFE GUIDE to success in the garden and should be consulted by every one who plants seeds. It is mailed FREE to all who appreciate QUALITY IN SEEDS. Shall we mail YOU a copy? If so, kindly name this magazine and write TO-DAY!

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FULL SIZE PIECES · 2 ¹/₂ and 5 ¹/₂ Boxes! · (Blue Label)

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"JOHN THOUGHT HIS LUCK HAD CHANGED AT LAST, BUT—"



JOHN.—"Shake, Sue! Congratulate me. My luck's changed at last."
 SUE.—"For goodness' sake! Where did you get that?"
 JOHN.—"Won it for solving puzzles in a newspaper. I'm going to learn to play it. I'm going to master it."
 THE CAT.—"Heavens! It's a ball game."

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If the advice of Mae Edna Wilder is followed there will be no more fat folks in a short time. She took off thirty pounds of superfluous flesh in less than

six weeks, and removed her double chin in two weeks, by treatment of her own discovery, and she generously offers to tell anyone about it who is sufficiently interested to write her. By her method there is nothing to take internally, no face straps or body bandages to be worn, no exercise or dieting, just a

simple, harmless home treatment that you can use in your own room without the knowledge of your most intimate friends, and as if by magic your fat rapidly disappears without inconvenience to you of any kind. She has written a book intensely interesting to fleshy people, and she will give away ten thousand copies absolutely free. The book tells all about her wonderful treatment, and she sends with it sworn affidavits to back up her claims. It costs you nothing to find out about this treatment, and if you have a large bust, large hips, large abdomen, a double chin, or superfluous flesh on any part of the body and wish to get rid of it quickly, write her at once for a copy of the free book before the present edition is exhausted, and you will be agreeably surprised and pleased with what she sends you. Her address is Mae Edna Wilder, Suite 191 A, Rochester, N. Y.



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Velvet Grip

Fits smoothly and keeps up the sock with neatness and security. It is comfortable because its wearer doesn't feel it.

The Boston Garter keeps its strength and excels in wear-value Fully guaranteed—a new pair free if you find an imperfection Easy to buy because all dealers have it.

See that Boston Garter is stamped on the clasp.

Boston Garters

Recognized the Standard, and Worn the World over by Well Dressed Men.



Sample Pair, Cotton, 15c. Silk, 50c.

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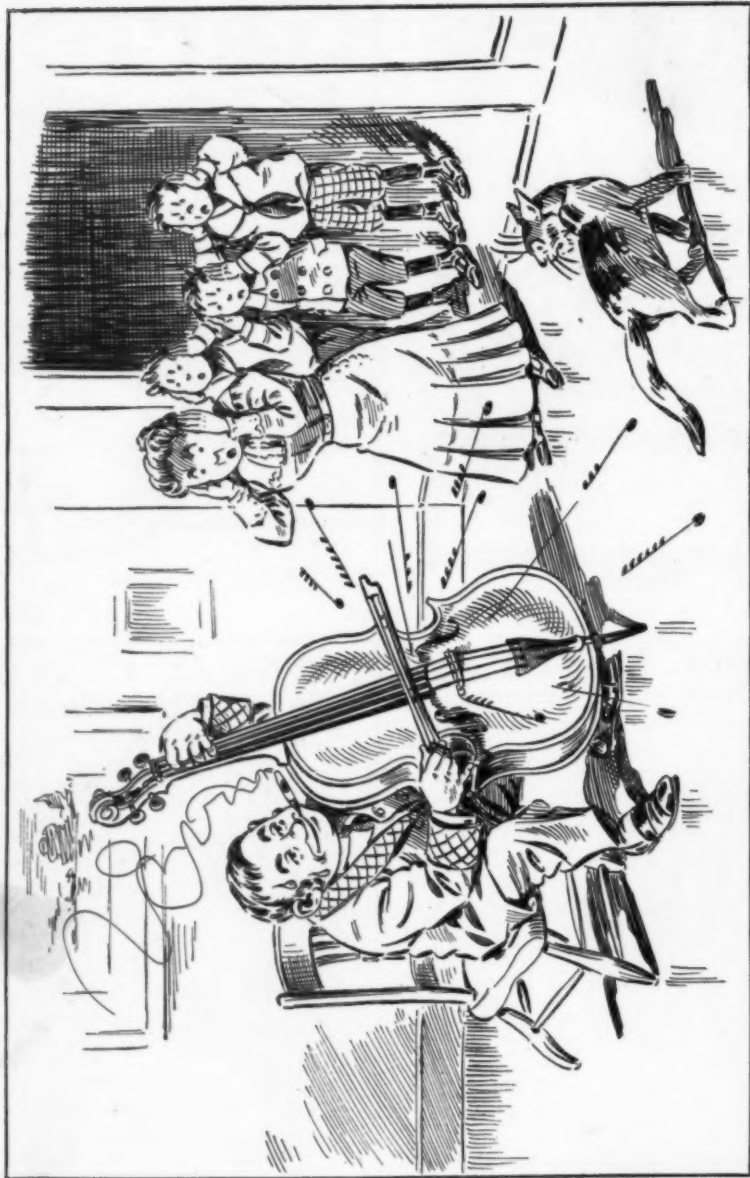
All thinking women know what Physical Culture does for the body. How it changes the figure of a middle-aged woman to that of a girl. **Physical Culture for the Face** removes Double Chins, Nose-to-Mouth Lines, Crows' Feet, Sagging Cheeks, rounds out Thin Faces, restores Youthful Appearance and Contour, beautifies Complexions. For the Young it prevents above Disfigurements. It is easily learned, dignified, and healthful.

I have taught by mail and most successfully aided many, many women. Write me for free booklet on "Physical Culture for the Face." Address

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"JOHN THOUGHT HIS LUCK HAD CHANGED AT LAST, BUT—"—Continued.



SUE.—"For pity's sake, John! That's awful! Why don't you cut it out? How in the name of common sense do you expect the boys to study their lessons? You're murdering it."

JOHN.—"Murdering nothing! I'm just trying to tune it up a little. Professor Fritz is coming up in a little bit to give me my first lesson. There's music in these things, and I'm going to get some out or bust."

THE CAT.—"Gee whiz! He's going to take lessons. The neighbors'll be up in arms."

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reproduced by a new and most wonderful process, that has compelled admiration and applause from the whole art world—and has been endorsed and adopted by the leading art schools and museums. These reproductions are properly known as **PAINTING PROOFS**, and are photographed and reproduced in full color on linen canvas.



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CLEAR THE SKIN



With CUTICURA Soap and Ointment

These pure, sweet and gentle emollients not only preserve, purify and beautify the skin, scalp, hair and hands but tend to prevent clogging of the pores, the common cause of pimples, blackheads, redness, roughness and other unsightly and annoying conditions.

Sold throughout the world. Depots: London, 37, Charterhouse Sq.; Paris, 10, Rue de la Chaussée d'Antin; Australia, R. Towns & Co.; Sydney, India, B. K. Paul, Calcutta; China, Hong Kong Drug Co.; Japan, Maruya, Ltd., Tokio; So. Africa, Lennon, Ltd., Cape Town, etc.; U.S.A., Potter Drug & Chem. Corp., Sole Props., 133 Columbus Ave., Boston. 32-page Cuticura Book, post-free, a Guide to the Best Care and Treatment of Skin and Scalp.

"JOHN THOUGHT HIS LUCK HAD CHANGED AT LAST, BUT—"—Continued.



PROF. FRITZ (half-hour later).—"Now den, one—two—tree—four—No! no! no! dat ees derribble! You murder ut! You are so stupid! You neffer learn to blay um dot way!"

SUE AND THE BOYS (in chorus).—"He! he! he! he! he! he! he! he! he! he! he!"

THE CAT.—"He! he! he! he! he! he! he! he! he! he!"

A NEW INDUSTRY

IN compliance with numerous requests for more detailed information relating to the **utilization of wood waste by distillation** and a general consideration of the new **infant industry of wood waste distilling**, including a full description of the apparatus and appliances used and the principle involved and also methods of chemical control and disposal of the products, illustrated by seventy-four engravings, a book of 156 pages, bound in cloth, will be sent to any address in the United States, post-paid, on receipt of \$3.20. This book also explains and treats of the manufacture of grain alcohol from wood waste. It opens a new field for investment.

A practical handbook on the distillation and denaturing alcohol from farm products and vegetable waste, *including free tax alcohol law* and its amendment of March 2nd, 1907, regulation and number of U. S. government authorized denaturing formulas. This book is not intended as a scientific treatise, but as a help to farmers and others wishing to go into this new industry on a moderate scale.

This book explains plainly the trade secrets; no licenses but a permit required and that is furnished free. Red tape removed, preparation of mash and common fermentation, simple distilling apparatus, rectification, alcohol from potatoes, grain, corn, wheat, rice, cereals, beets, molasses, sugar corn, etc. Indexed. 281 pages. 60 illustrations. 12mo, cloth, price \$1.20, post-paid.

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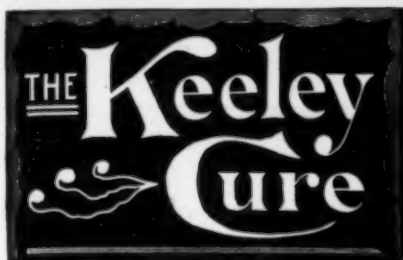
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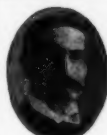
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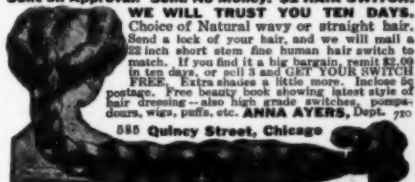
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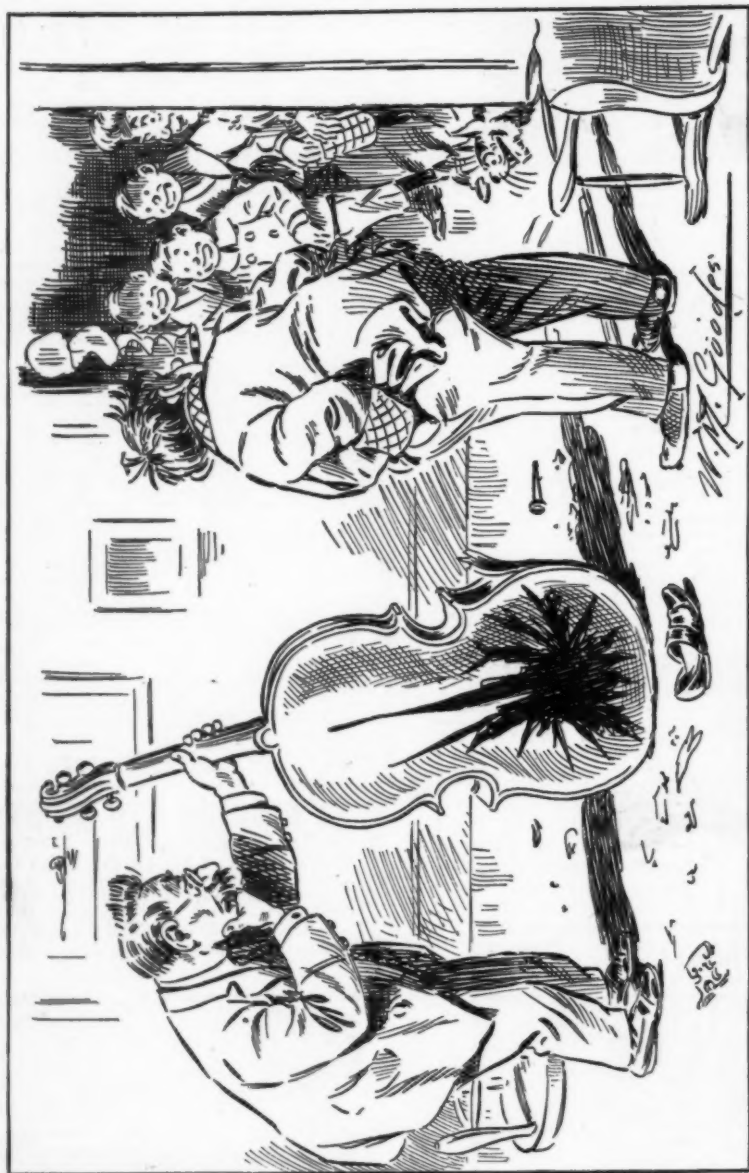
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